

Young people's geographies in rural post-socialist Germany: a case study in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

by

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Abstract

Nadine Daniela Schäfer

Young people's geographies in rural post-socialist Germany: a case study in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

An increasing interest in young people's rural lives can be registered within social sciences. However, only a very limited amount of research has been conducted in the context of post-socialist countries even though rural young people are described as one of the groups most severely affected by declining standards of welfare and by the rise of socio-economic inequalities in post-socialist communities (see Brake & Büchner 1996; McAuley 1995; Kollmorgen 2003).

This thesis aims to address this gap by analysing the way rural young people in the East German state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern perceive and negotiate structural disadvantages. It follows a wider call in the area of childhood and youth studies to acknowledge both, structural conditions that characterise young people's lives and young people's agency (see James, Jenks & Prout 1998; Holloway & Valentine 2000) to analyse the complexity of young people's geographies.

Conceptually, this thesis critically reflects on Beck's (2000), Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (2002) and Giddens' (1990, 1991, 1994, 2000) theoretical work on people's lives in second modernity. To more fully understand the meaning of space for young people's everyday lives and to question who suffers and who benefits from new chances and risks I will introduce Massey's (1993, 2005) 'progressive concept of place'. Her concept of space offers a valuable framework to analyse the heterogeneity of young people's everyday lives.

To address young people as experts of their own lives and to give them a voice I developed a participatory research project with 67 young people aged between 14 and 16 years. It will be shown that participants referred to the perception of still existing fundamental East-West German differences which had multiple implications on their present day and future lives. They did not, however, identify themselves as the 'losers of reunification' (Brake & Büchner 1996; Kollmorgen 2003) but highlighted the emergence of new opportunities for young people. As such this thesis challenges the universal understanding of 'the rural' and of the post-socialist transformation process as a one way process to capitalism. It thus contributes to a more plural geographical analysis (Woods 2005) of young people's lives in second modernity.

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Schäfer, N. (2005) Participatory Research Methods in Practice. Children’s Geographies Conference, Brunel University, 23rd –6th June 2005 [presentation]

Schäfer, N. (2005) Being Young in the Countryside. A Research Project on, for and with young people in (East) Germany. AAG Denver, 5th –9th April 2005 [presentation]

Schäfer, N. (2005) Lebenswelten ländlicher Jugendlicher. Starterkonferenz Caminante: Lebensweltorientierte Jugendhilfeplanung im ländlichen Raum unter den Bedingungen des demographischen Wandels. Magdeburg (Germany), 22nd February 2005 [presentation]

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CHAPTER 1

Young people's lives in rural East Germany

1. Introduction

Young people growing up in rural regions generally suffer from poorer choices of education, job training facilities, and employment opportunities than their counterparts in urban areas (Vanderbeck & Dunkley 2003; Jentsch 2004; Jentsch & Shucksmith 2004; Punch 2004; Ansell 2005). Scholars have highlighted the specific disadvantages of rural East Germany compared with West German regions due to the dramatic loss of services and facilities since reunification (Brake & Büchner 1996; Baur & Burrmann 2000; Kollmorgen 2003). The collapse of state socialism has had far-reaching economic, political and cultural consequences that have led to a "re-definition of almost the entire fabric of everyday life" (Young & Light 2001: 942) and caused new uncertainties as lives and worlds of meanings 'lost their moorings' (Verdery 1999). Children and young people have thus been identified as one of the groups most severely affected by declining standards of welfare and by the rise of socio-economic inequalities in post-socialist societies (Brake & Büchner 1996; McAuley 1995; Kollmorgen 2003). However, there has been limited research on the ways in which young people negotiate their life circumstances and develop strategies

for building meaningful and purposeful lives (see Jeffrey & McDowell 2004) in rural East Germany.

This thesis aims to address this gap by analysing the way rural young people in the East German state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern perceive their everyday lives and how they negotiate, challenge and live with perceived disadvantages and structural forms of exclusions. The thesis follows a wider call in the area of childhood and youth studies to acknowledge both, structural conditions that characterize young people's lives and young people's agency (Holloway & Valentine 2000; James, Jenks & Prout 1998). To fully understand the meaning of growing up in a post-socialist, rural region I will introduce the theoretical framework of conceptualising young people's lives and the meaning of space in second modernity. It will be questioned in how far young people's everyday life experiences in rural East Germany are captured in and can be explained by these theoretical considerations.

1.1 Theoretical Context

The age of high or second modernity is characterised by the new challenges and risks that have arisen as places have become increasingly connected at a global scale (Beck 2002; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). Spaces seem to lose their traditional shapes due to place-polygamy and the expansion of the capitalist market system (Giddens 1990, 1991, 1994; Beck 2000). Although these spatial transformations have provided new opportunities for people, these have come with an increased sense of risk and the loss of the historical guidelines on how to negotiate life chances. Consequently, questions have been raised about the meaning and the value of space and, in turn, how

individuals construct their own identities within this changing world. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002: 23) argue that while traditions and spaces have not completely lost their role, personal and spatial identities in second modernity have to be chosen or sometimes even invented as: “[i]ndividuals become actors, builders, jugglers, stage-managers of their own biographies and identities and also of their social lives and networks”.

This thesis aims to critically interrogate Beck’s, Beck-Gernsheim’s and Giddens’ description of the present day world to understand the complexity of young people’s everyday lives in rural East Germany. Their focus on identity construction offers a general understanding of present day life conditions and young people’s responses to it. However, empirical results have indicated that the individualisation process is highly uneven depending on dimensions such as social class, gender, age, and ethnicity (Büchner et al. 1996; Holloway & Valentine 2000; Shucksmith 2000; Laegran 2002; Förster 2003; Jentsch 2004; Shucksmith 2004; Hörschelmann & Schäfer 2005, 2007). The reference to young people’s agency thus needs to be understood as a ‘socially situated agency’ (Evans 2002). It emphasises that individual, creative, proactive and resistant forms of social engagement are influenced but not determined by structures and the contexts young people are growing up in (see also Kesby 2007).

Although Beck, Beck-Gernsheim and Giddens acknowledge that structural inequalities are still existent in second modernity they do not give an insight into who suffers or benefits more from the new choices and risks. In accordance with Shucksmith (2004) I argue that it is necessary “to develop these theories in less totalising ways if they are to capture the reality of people’s choices in differing circumstances” (ibid: 56).

There is thus still a need to research and explain processes of social inclusion and exclusion, to analyse why some people profit more from the new individuality than others. Further, Beck's, Beck-Gernsheim's and Giddens' work does not address issues such as the dramatic socio-economic, cultural and political changes that are connected, for example, with reunification of the two German states and their impact on people's everyday lives. It thus does not theoretically capture the experiences of young people in post-socialist countries. Recent work indicates, however, that these young people are often additionally disadvantaged. Nonetheless, hardly any research has focused on young people's experiences of the transformation processes on their everyday lives.

This thesis aims to address this research gap in reconstructing young people's geographies in a rural, East German region. It thus particularly focuses on young people's understanding and experiences of space and the meaning of post-socialist transformation process, to question how far the concept of second modernity reflects and captures life conditions of young people growing up in rural East Germany. Questions will be raised about how young people perceive and engage with new choices and forces facing them in an ever-changing world. Particular emphasis will be placed on young people's identities and how they are constituted in and through particular spaces.

It will be argued that people's understanding and experiences of place and space and their (perceived) relationship to them still need to be considered as an important part of their identity-formations. With regard to the rural context Wiborg (2004: 429) has argued that "rural locality as a social, cultural and geographical background constitutes a repertoire of symbols that individuals use in different ways in creating their desired identity". That is why understandings of rurality have to be seen in direct relation to the construction

of the (rural) childhood, more precisely, to the conception of what rural childhood 'should' be (Aitken 2001). Hughes (1997:171) has further highlighted that "only when we understand the multifaceted meanings underlying representations of rurality will we begin to make sense of the relationship between rural discourses and contemporary rural experience". This means images of rurality are reflected in and therefore essential for the construction of childhood and thus young people's everyday life experiences. To understand young people's geographies in rural Germany it is thus necessary to analyse their understanding of 'rurality' and of 'growing up in a rural region'.

Further, it needs to be considered that growing up in a post-socialist region might (still) be connected with a repertoire of symbols and understandings that affect young people's life experiences. It will thus be important to analyse young people's understandings, experiences and perceptions of, for example, the East-West German relationship and how the post-socialist transformation process impacts on their everyday lives. However, in the context of researching people's lives in post-socialist countries, academics have warned against research which places the East-West relationship at the centre of its analysis. They argue that it risks reinforcing the West as a prime referent and often results in the neglect of acknowledging the similarities between post-socialist and western countries as well as the heterogeneity amongst post-socialist societies (see Hann et al. 2002; Stenning & Hörschelmann 2008).

The thesis thus aims to reconstruct young people's understandings of both growing up rural *and* growing up in (rural) East Germany. This approach provides a better understanding of the multiple ways and the different levels at which their rural, East German residency affects their everyday life experiences.

In this context the geographical work of Massey (1993) becomes important. She has conceptualised a 'global sense of place' by emphasising the social relations and understandings that characterise places. This offers a general guideline on how to analyse the 'glocal' dimension of young people's lives in combining different scales of place and space. This progressive understanding of place highlights the importance of the multiple power-relations that characterise participants' everyday experiences. I will particularly draw on Panelli's (2002) work who has developed Massey's understanding of place further by focusing on the different dimensions of negotiation that capture the multiple power-relations rural young people are engaged with. It allows to empirically research the multiple geographies of young people's lives.

I will refer to data which were gained through a qualitative, participatory orientated research project that was conducted with 67 young people most of them were aged between 14 and 16 years (the study also included a small number of 13 year olds (n=3)). The research project was conducted in a rural region of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (MV), one of five 'neue Bundesländer' ('new federal estates') that belonged to the German Democratic Republic (GDR) until 1990.

1.2 The site of study: Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is situated in the North-East of Germany and is one of five new Bundesländer of the Federal Republic of Germany which belonged to the GDR until 1990 (see Figure 1.1). With its size of around 23,000 km² it covers 6.5% of the total area of the FRG and has a population of 1.75

million which corresponds to 2.1% of the total population of the FRG (Statistisches Landesamt Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2003a).

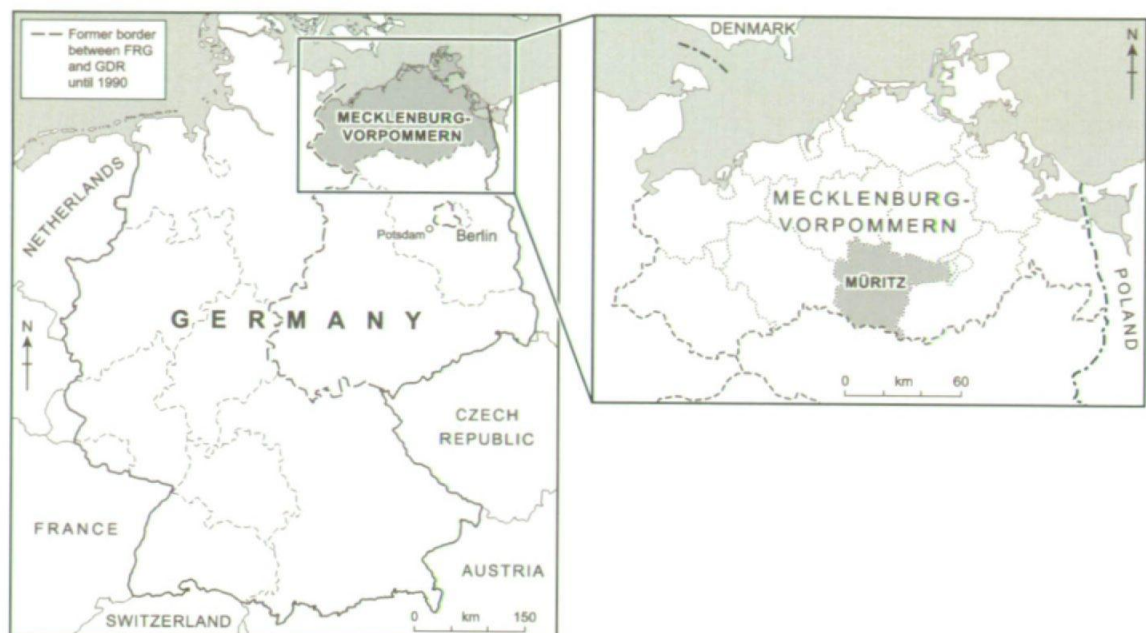


Figure 1.1: Location of the research area

(Source: Map drawn by the Cartographic Resources Unit in Plymouth 2006)

The Ministry for Education, Science and Culture in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern promotes this area in describing it as “the bud between Germany, Scandinavia and the Northeast of Europe” (Ministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2001:4). This poetic description does not only refer to the localisation of the Bundesland, but also to its physical characteristics: Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is marked by around 1750 inner waterways and its lakes like the ‘Müritz’ and the ‘Schweriner Lake’ are among the biggest lakes in Germany. In addition it possesses more than 260 nature protection areas with a total area of around 70 hectar (Statistisches Landesamt Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2003a). These features contribute to define Mecklenburg-Vorpommern as a rural region that has great potential to develop its tourism further in attracting people to its unique landscape.

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is further characterised by agriculture, with more than 60% of its land used for arable farming. It means that Mecklenburg-Vorpommern can be described as a dominantly rural federal estate. Around 50% of the people living in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern live in towns or villages which have less than 10,000 inhabitants (Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung 2005). Only six cities have more than 50,000 inhabitants of which Rostock (with around 200,000 inhabitants) and Schwerin (with around 100,000 inhabitants) represent the biggest cities in the region.

Since reunification, however, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern has suffered from economic changes and has been classed as a EU 1 region, confirming that it is one of the poorest and structurally weakest regions in Europe (Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung 2005). This is reflected in its poorly developed infrastructure which is oriented mainly towards Berlin, the capital of Germany. Moreover, the population density of the region is the lowest in Germany and unemployment rates are more than twice the national average (see Table 1.1).

	Federal Republic of Germany	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	Müritz (MV) (Research Area)
Population density	231/km ²	75/km ²	40/km ²
Unemployment rate	9.8%	20.0%	22.9%
Youth unemployment rate (≥ 25 years old)	9.4%	12.5%	18.7%

Table 1.1: Population density and unemployment rates within the research area
(Source: Statistisches Jahrbuch Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2003)

Table 1.1 indicates that the unemployment rate of under 25 year olds in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is higher than the national average and with regard to the specific research area (Müritz) this rate is twice the national average. In

addition the birth-rate dropped drastically by more than 50% between the years 1989 and 1994 (Statistisches Landesamt Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2003a) and is still in decline. High out-migration has characterized the region since reunification of the two German states. Between 1990 and 2004 the net migration added up to 240,000 people which represent a decrease of the population numbers in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern by -12.5% (see Kück et al. 2006). This trend of declining population numbers is forecast to continue (Fischer & Kück 2004; Kröhnert et al. 2004) and is one of the main problems the region has to face. The prognosis for 2020 is that Mecklenburg-Vorpommern's population will be one of the oldest in Germany (Kröhnert et al. 2004). Although these population problems have been put on the political agenda in Germany there is still a lack of research that focuses on the situation of young people in these places. Such insights, however, are needed to develop a more sustainable standard of living for young people in rural areas and to offer them a genuine choice to leave or stay in the region.

A prime example of the radical changes that affected people's rural everyday life is the restructuring of the 'Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaft' (LPGs), large-scale agricultural cooperatives that fulfilled important social functions in addition to their economic roles during the GDR. LPGs were the institutional outcome of collectivisation and industrialisation of socialist agriculture (Wilson & Wilson 2001; Wilson & Klages 2001). These cooperatives took over responsibility for a wide range of social and administrative functions in villages, offering childcare, community services such as libraries, bars and shops and organising cultural and social events (see Rudolph 1997; van Hoven 2001). In addition, the 'Freie Deutsche Jugend' (FDJ, Free German Youth) offered young people a wide range of leisure-facilities and

organised social activities. It was the only official youth movement of the GDR, an instrument of the state that most East German youth joined at the age of 13 or 14. In 1988, 99.4% of pupils and 92.5% of university students were members (Schefold 1995). The FDJ monopolised organised youth activities and ran holiday camps, discos and youth clubs for rural, as well as urban young people.

Differences between rural and urban areas in the GDR were generally small since state policies followed the ideological aim of eliminating structural inequalities between agricultural and industrial societies (see Beetz 2004). Since reunification in 1990, however, socio-economic differences between rural and urban areas have re-emerged strongly in East Germany (van Hoven 2001, 2002; Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung 2005). The restructuring of cooperatives has led to a major decline in agricultural employment (see van Hoven 2001) and to the loss of social services associated with them. In addition, the FDJ lost nearly all its members and the number of youth clubs declined rapidly. Out of 9,620 state-run youth clubs that were registered in MV in 1988 only 312 such clubs existed in 1991 (Schefold 1995).

As the number of school-children in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern has declined by 36.4% since reunification (Statistisches Landesamt 2003b), due to general out-migration and dramatically falling birth-rates, services and facilities for young people have closed down, making access to education and training as well as employment increasingly difficult. Young people growing up in rural East Germany are facing problems associated with changing schools and travelling further to school as well as fewer training options (see Brake 1996; Brake & Büchner 1996; Baur & Burrmann 2000; Kollmorgen 2003). Partly in response to this, skilled young people in particular are leaving the region. Such trends reinforce rather than reduce the differences between East and West

Germany. Young people growing up and living in East Germany are thus often referred to as the 'losers' of reunification (see Brake 1996; Brake and Büchner 1996; Baur and Burrmann 2000; Kollmorgen 2003).

While such a characterisation recognises the multiple disadvantages faced by East German youth, it also contributes to the perception that young people growing up in these rural regions are "a 'problem', in relation to crime, drugs, political extremism" (Smith 1998: 297). This negative and one-sided picture of 'East German youth' dominates public and academic discourses and fails to acknowledge the heterogeneity of young people in East Germany. The construction of East German youth as 'different' and 'other' may also influence East German young people's own socio-spatial identity construction negatively, thus contributing further to feelings of exclusion.

In order to challenge the perception of East German youths as either deviants or victims, more attention needs to be paid to discourses *by* rather than *about* them. In particular, it is important to understand the lifestyle strategies adopted by young people in response to challenges or changes that *they* view as affecting *their* lives (see also Hörschelmann & Schäfer 2005). This thesis aims to address this by foregrounding young people's understandings and everyday life experiences, analysing both structural forms of exclusion and young people's agency. It thus follows a more recent call of social scientists to understand the post-socialist transformation process, not simply as a one-way process to 'capitalism' (for further discussion see Chapter 2), but to conceptualise and empirically research the heterogeneity of (young) people's lives in post-socialist contexts (Burawoy & Verdery 1999; Pilkington et al. 2002; Pilkington et al. 2003; Pilkington 2004; Stenning 2005; Stenning and Hörschelmann 2008).

1.3 Aims and Objectives

This thesis sets out to provide an in-depth understanding of the heterogeneous geographies of young people's lives in rural East Germany. To do this, it is necessary to acknowledge how structure and agency combine to influence the choices, and actions of young people in, between and across different spaces. Such insights can only be achieved by listening to young people's voices and placing them at the centre of the research process.

Therefore, within the context of rural, post-socialist Germany, this thesis has five main aims:

1. to examine young people's understanding, experience and meaning of space with regard to their rural residency. I will particularly focus on the multiple power-relations that characterise and that impact, or are felt to impact, on young people's lives;
2. to advance knowledge of how young people perceive and experience the post-socialist transformation process. This will include the analysis of how young people position themselves in the context of a united Germany;
3. to acknowledge young people's agency to determine their life chances within the structures identified above. This will focus on how their identity is shaped by their perceptions, experiences and negotiations of different spaces and highlight the multiple strategies young people develop to cope with, challenge or even overcome perceived disadvantages;

4. to adopt a participatory research approach that works *with* young people to empower their agency;
5. to inform and be informed by theoretical developments in children's geographies and to discuss participants' life experiences in rural East Germany within the context of young people's lives in second modernity .

1.4 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical framework of the thesis to understand the meaning of place and space for young people's everyday lives in second modernity. This chapter provides both an overview of predominant issues dealt with in the existing literature and identifies areas of knowledge to which the thesis will contribute. The first part of the chapter focuses on the initial debate that put children on the geographical agenda in identifying them as 'marginalized others' who need to be given a voice (Philo 1992). In accordance with Murdoch and Pratt's (1993) reply to Philo that deeper power relations need to be identified that cause forms of marginalisation, the second part of the chapter aims to contextualise young people's life in second modernity. I will refer to the work of Beck (2000, 2002), Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) and Giddens (1990, 1991, 1994) in particular who have discussed the effect of new risks and opportunities with regard to people's everyday life and identity formation. I will complement their work by introducing Massey's (1993, 2005) progressive understanding of place which refers to the power-geometries of space and thus highlights the importance of analysing the multiple power-

relations that characterise young people's everyday lives. Further, the construction of rurality and its implications on young people's lives will be discussed. The chapter will finally address the meaning of growing up in a post-socialist country to understand the socio-economic and spatial context that characterises young people's lives in rural East Germany.

Chapter 3 will give an overview of research on young people's lives, particularly focusing on research on rural youth. Referring to Panelli's (2002) dimensions of negotiations as a valuable framework within which rural young people's (negotiations of) power-relations can be described I will look at issues of: understandings of rurality, disadvantages of growing up rural, youth out-migration as well as young people's position within the rural community and their perception of their rural environment.

Chapter 4 develops the methodological context in which the thesis is framed and thus addresses the fourth aim of the thesis. It draws attention to the construction of young people as social agents who have often been neglected in research and thus need to be given a voice. It will be discussed which implications this understanding has on doing research not only *on*, but *with* and *for* young people. The aim to facilitate participation through the research process builds the methodological starting point and rationale for the chosen participatory research design. I will particularly focus on different ways of engaging young people in the research process and including them in decision-making processes that affect the research design, research content and research outcomes. I will also discuss how I aimed to create a more sustainable

participatory environment though facilitating, for example, an exchange between participant and adult gatekeepers¹.

Chapter 5, 6 and 7 will focus on the empirical data themselves. They aim to reconstruct the multiple geographies of young people in rural East Germany. *Chapter 5* will provide an in-depth analysis of the multiple-power relations that characterise young people's everyday lives with regard to the main dimensions of negotiation identified by Panelli (2002). Firstly, the dimension of rural knowledge will be analysed. How do young people construct rurality, which disadvantages and advantages do they connect with growing up rural, and do they (re)produce a rural-urban dialectic? Secondly, I will focus on the dimensions of social relations and rural space: How do young people perceive and describe their position within the local community and how do they negotiate and perceive rural spaces? I will analyse, for example, in how far young people's use of different places and spaces is defined and restricted by categories such as age, class and gender². Thirdly, I will look at the meaning of growing up in post-socialist Germany.

It became clear in the focus group discussions, that participants were particularly concerned about the limited vocational training and job opportunities within the region. Building on the results from the first analysis chapter, *Chapter 6* will thus particularly focus on young people's negotiation of 'rural work' (Panelli 2002). To get an insight into the understanding of young people with regard to their personal chances and career opportunities within the area, this chapter includes some results from the questionnaire survey (n=123). This will

¹ The limits and/or advantages of involving young people are discussed in more detail in a special issue on researching young people's lives, see Schäfer and Yarwood (2008).

² As the rate of foreign people is very low in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern - with 0.5% it is the lowest in the Federal Republic of Germany (Statistisches Jahrbuch 2003) - it can be assumed that ethnical background will not play an important role in my project.

set the context to analyse the different ways in which those who participated further in the research project (n=67) prepared themselves for the transition from school to work. It will be shown that young people develop multiple strategies to challenge or overcome this disadvantage and that these strategies varied immensely amongst them. Finally, Chapter 7 analyses how young people pictured their future prospects. In the process of the research project it became clear that these future images did not only mirror their everyday experiences but further had a strong impact on, for example, participants' decision making. I will argue that these 'images of their future lives' are influenced by and are influencing young people's everyday lives and that they varied immensely amongst young people. This dimension does not easily fit into the ones identified by Panelli. However, it offers an additional insight into the heterogeneity of young people's lives and helps to understand why some might benefit more from new opportunities than others.

Chapter 8 will discuss the research findings in the wider context of rural young people's lives in second modernity. It will reflect on young people's understanding, perception and experiences of space and the ways it impacts on their everyday and future lives. Further, I will discuss how the idea of young people's future images could be conceptualised theoretically and refer to some areas of future research.

1.5 Working terminologies and positionality of author

Before I discuss the theoretical framework of the thesis in Chapter 2, I want to conceptualise the terms 'youth', 'East/West German youth' and 'East/West Germany' which are central for this thesis.

1.5.1 Working terminology: Youth

From a post-modern perspective 'childhood' and 'youth' are understood as social constructions. The definition of the terms is slippery: the transition from childhood to adulthood has become very fluid as it is influenced by changing cultures and legislations as well as social processes which means that definitions change over time and space (Dahlstroem 1996; Valentine 1996; Jones 1997; Aitken 2001; Valentine 2003). While acknowledging the critiques of linear and transition-oriented constructions of childhood that understand children, young people or adolescents and adults along a continuum assuming increasing agency and competencies (Valentine 1996; Punch 2002), I understand young people as 'human beings' rather than 'human becomings' (Valentine 1996; James, Jenks & Prout 1998). This acknowledges 'youth' as a state of being and highlights the understanding of young people as social agents who develop their own understandings and meanings of place and space.

In the context of my research project I employ the term 'youth' or 'young people' with regard to the participants. They were all aged between 14 and 16 years. However, I will refer repeatedly to research that has focused on 'children'. Children are mainly defined by the characteristic of not yet having entered puberty. The term therefore mainly refers to young people under the age of 12. Understanding 'children' and 'young people' as a group of marginalized others means, however, that theoretical and methodological considerations are often transferable to the construction of youth and its implications for researching young people's lives.

1.5.2 Working terminology: East/West German youth

Young people who are actually living in a region that formerly belonged to the GDR are referred to in this thesis as 'East German youth'. This corresponds with references in the academic literature and also reflects the wider public discourse in, for example, the German media (Schlottmann 2005; Hörschelmann 2007). While this term originally referred to young people that had been socialised at least partly in the socialist GDR, it now includes the first generation of young people who were born at the time of, or just after reunification in 1990. That means the term is still used for young people who have not experienced living in a socialist country themselves. This is the case for the young people who participated in the research project and who were born between 1989 and 1991.

Such categorization could be justified through empirical research results which indicate that young people's daily life in East Germany is still characterized by influences that are connected with the post-socialist transformation processes and that can only be understood with regard to the socialist background their parents and older relatives grew up in. Although I will use the term East German (versus West German) in this thesis, it has to be questioned, however, what these terms mean for young people and if a categorization as 'East Germans' is still appropriate and helpful to describe their lives.

1.5.3 Working terminology: East and West Germany

Empirical research has shown that the euphoric atmosphere of being united to 'one nation' at the time of reunification quickly turned into an understanding of fundamental differences between East and West Germans (see e.g. Dietzsch & Dölling 1996a, 1996b). This perception has now become an integral part of people's everyday lives. It is connected with an understanding that East Germans differ from the West Germans and still have to catch up with the western lifestyle. 'Der Spiegel' (2004), for example, one of the most widely read and well respected weekly journals in Germany reporting on political and cultural topics, captioned its edition in September 2004 with the title: 'vale of whinge East' ('Jammertal Ost', Spiegel 2004) which described the relation between East- and West Germans in the 14th year after reunification. The leading articles were called "Misery in the intermediate world" and "A whole region running behind the present" (ibid: 33ff). They referred to an image of the East German 'other' who still suffers from the dramatic economical, political and cultural changes of reunification in 1990. The authors of the articles go on to argue that this lethargic and 'deconstructive' behaviour is characteristic of East Germans as they still hold fast to the 'good old times' of the GDR. This, so the argument goes, has made it impossible for East Germans to 'move on' and 'catch up' with the western world. From this point of view the 'inner' reunification between East and West Germans has still not been completed as the East Germans 'deny' assimilating to the modern West. This example from the media gives a good insight into the dominant perception of the East-West German relationship that still characterises the inner German discourse. This perception also finds its expression in the persistence of the terms East and West

Germany which refers to the former borders between the western GDR and the socialist FRG.

In line with this, participants often referred to the East and the West. In this thesis I will thus use these terms East and West Germany which need to be understood not only as geographical descriptions but expressions of the inner German relationship.

1.5.4 Positionality of author

Finally, I want to reflect on my own positionality, my 'intellectual auto/biography' (Stanely 1990) that represents an important framework within which this research project has been developed, conducted and analysed (see also Cloke et al. 1999). Growing up in West Germany myself, my knowledge of the GDR and the fall of the Wall was based on history books and TV documentaries. At the time of unification in 1990 I was 15 years old and shared the initial excitement in the country of being united again, assuming that socialism and differences between the two German parts were 'overcome' with the political act of unification. However, moving to East Germany in 1996, to study sociology at the University of Potsdam, made me realise that people's everyday lives were still affected in many ways by their experiences of growing up in a socialist country and by the transformation process. Since then I have been aiming to get a better understanding of people's everyday lives and the meaning of growing up in a socialist/post-socialist country, from a sociological and geographical perspective (see Schäfer 2002, 2003, 2005a, 2005b; Hörschelmann & Schäfer 2005, 2007).

Following a Magister Artium degree in sociology (equivalent to English Masters degree), I worked as a research assistant for Dr. Kathrin Hörschelmann in the School of Geography (University of Plymouth) on an ESRC funded project on 'Globalisation, cultural practice and youth identity in former East Germany' (Ref R000223955). This project used innovative methods and examined the dialectic between globalising forces that are largely beyond young people's control and the multiple negotiations of these forces in everyday practices of identity formation.

Work on this project exposed me to geographical literature and a greater appreciation of place and space in the lives of young people. In order to take this forward, I started a PhD, supervised by Dr. Kathrin Hörschelmann, that built upon this project and focused on young people in rural areas. Initially it was hoped that a second research student might undertake a parallel, comparative study in the South-West of England, but funding was not forthcoming for this. The PhD therefore focused on a specific place, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, that allowed me to combine sociological interests in second modernity (Giddens 1990, 1991, 1994; Beck 2000, 2002; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002) with ideas from human geography (Massey 1993; Panelli 2002; Massey 2005), to examine more closely the sociological and geographical processes affecting young people's lives in post-socialist Germany.

Focusing on young people who have been born at, or even after the time of unification, my initial motivation to conduct this research was to (re)open the discussion about the multiple geographies in post-socialist contexts, acknowledging both structural constraints and young people's agency. Such insights can provide a better understanding of the complexity of young people's lives in rural East Germany and hopefully challenge the all too often one-sided

perception of 'East-West (German) differences' that still dominates the public and academic debate within and beyond the German context.

CHAPTER 2

Children's and young people's geographies in second modernity

2. Introduction

This chapter develops the wider theoretical framework for the thesis by explaining why research on the geographies of young people who are growing up in rural East Germany is needed and how this can be done. I will give an overview of the initial geographical debate that led to the important step of including the voices of marginalized others. This debate formed the starting point for putting children and young people on the geographical agenda. Since then geographical research that emphasises young people's agency has become an essential part of geographical study leading to the development of 'Children's Geographies' as a subfield of study (van Blerk & Barker 2008).

However, it will be argued that more detailed research on young people's lives is needed as children and young people still represent a marginalized group in an adult-centred society. To elaborate their multiple geographies it is necessary to not only focus on their agency but also to include the wider structures that set the contextual frame for their daily lives. Theories of Beck (2000, 2002), Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) and Giddens (1990, 1991, 1994, 2000) are increasingly identified by geographers and sociologists as offering a valuable background for contextual research. These authors have included the dimension of identity construction and the concept of human agency in their theories of global change (Furlong & Cartmel 1997; Griffin 2001; Valentine 2003; Jentsch & Shucksmith 2004). To understand the meaning of

space for young people's lives I want to complement Beck's and Giddens' considerations through Massey's (1993, 2005) 'progressive concept of place' which can be described as a geographical response to increasing uncertainties about definitions of 'place' in the age of second modernity. Massey highlights the connection between the social and space and offers a valuable framework to analyse young people's socio-spatial identity construction in second modernity.

It will further be highlighted that there is still a lack of research focusing on rural young people's lives as most research is conducted within urban contexts. With regard to East Germany it will be argued that research on rural youth living in former post-socialist countries is virtually non-existent.

The chapter is divided into the following sections:

1. a general overview of the initial debate of including 'marginalized others' in geographical and social research;
2. a review of the general conditions that describe young people's lives in second modernity including a call to understand new emerging inequalities;
3. a concept of space which helps to understand the meaning of space for young people's everyday lives in second modernity;
4. setting the context of researching young people's lives in rural East Germany

2.1 Children's Geographies: Putting young people on the geographical agenda

There has been a fundamental change in the way social scientists think about children within the last twenty years. In the mid to late 1980s, academics began to question the exclusion of children from the theoretical and empirical literature as children were often only indirectly studied and thus 'absent present' (Valentine 2003: 39) in work concerned with the family, education or public space and homelessness (see Büchner 1995; Holloway and Valentine 2000; Valentine 2003). Geographers and social scientists started to highlight, however, that children's and young people's everyday lives are often characterised by major disadvantages and forms of exclusion and that their spatial experiences are affected by dimensions such as gender, age, social class and ethnicity (Hart 1977; Matthews 1981, 1984a, 1984b; Katz 1993, 1994; Sibley 1995).

Children had mainly been seen as human *becomings* who have not yet reached the status of a fully adult human *being*, but socialisation would lead them towards this (James, Jenks & Prout 1998). In other words, children were perceived as 'adults in the making rather than children in the state of being' (Brannen & O'Brien 1995: 730). This included an image of children as subjects who are incompetent and incomplete (Valentine 1996; Holloway and Valentine 2000) and therefore in need of (adult) protection (Lloyd-Smith & Tarr 2000).

The 'cultural turn' led to a major critique of this conception. In rural geography this change was signified by Chris Philo's (1992) identification of children as one group of 'neglected others' whose 'geographies' needed to be accounted for. Based on Colin Ward's (1990) book 'The Child in the Country'

Philo critiqued the marginalisation of young people both in rural societies as well as in the academic literature (see also Qvortrup 1993).

Murdoch and Pratt (1993) argued that marginalised others should not only been given a voice but that the deeper power-structures causing social inclusion or exclusion needed to be researched and understood. In line with this, Brannen and O'Brien (1995: 737) called for a social science of childhood "which gives central place to the construction of childhoods and their different structural conditions and inequalities whilst at the same time elucidating children's own experiences, definitions and construction of their daily lives". James, Jenks and Prout (1998) shared this concern in their effort to develop a new paradigm for the social studies of childhood. Their call to conceptualise the child as a human 'being' initiated an epistemological break as well as promoting greater interdisciplinarity of research on children. On the one hand this has led to a growing interest within geography in children as social actors (Holloway & Valentine 2000) and, on the other hand, resulted in an increasing interest in the spatiality of childhood within sociology (James, Jenks & Prout 1998; Christensen & James 2000). Geography thus moved away from positivist towards a more cultural approach that considers both the influence of social processes and human agency.

As a result, work on children and youth has grown rapidly in geography. 'Children's Geographies' has emerged as a sub-area of research that follows the post-modern approach to elaborate the complexity and heterogeneity of young people's lives while aiming to include the voices of marginalized 'others' (Philo 1992). This finds its expression in the growing number of academic articles focusing on children's geographies which have been published, for example, as special issues in 'Area' (2002) and the 'Journal of Rural Studies'

(2002). Additionally, the first edition of the journal 'Children's Geographies' was published in 2003 initiating an academic discussion about the role of Children's Geographies at the AAG 2004 in Philadelphia/USA. Furthermore, several conferences (such as conferences organised in St. Andrews/Scotland in 2004, Brunel University/London 2005, at the University of Reading 2007) and conference sessions (AAG/Denver 2005, AAG/Chicago 2007; RGS-IBG London 2006, 2007) were recently held on the issue of Children's Geographies.

While geographers have started to discuss critically the advantages and disadvantages of treating 'Children's Geographies' as a new sub discipline within social science (Horton & Kraftl 2005; Spencer 2005) two main ideas can be identified which unite the theoretical and empirical work that emerges under this heading. The first idea refers to Philo's (1992, see also Philo 1993) description of young people as a marginalized group. 'Children's Geographies' focuses on the unequal power relations particularly between adults and children and their effects on young people's lives. In this context it is argued that although children have been placed on the geographical agenda particularly over the last ten years "(...) there is no authentic or just voice for childhood because the adult world dominates that of the child" (Aitken 2001:120 see also Aitken 1994; Valentine 1996; Matthews, Limb & Taylor 1998; McCormack 2002). Barry (1996) and Leyshon (2002) have therefore described young people as a disempowered group or as a group with 'little power' (see also Matthews, Limb & Taylor 1998). This finds its expression for example in the fact that the places where children and young people can spend their time are always regulated by adult gatekeepers (Matthews et al. 1998). 'Children's Geographers' argue that this structural power imbalance needs to be challenged as young people's perceptions, needs, their experiences and rights

are not adequately represented in an adult-centred society (see Punch 2002). This mirrors geographers recent called for a greater engagement with inequalities through less hierarchical practices in social geography (Kitchin & Hubbard 1999; Cloke 2002; Pain 2003, 2004).

In addition, the second idea which is central to 'Children's Geographies' refers to young people as human 'beings' whose life worlds, experiences and needs differ from that of adults (see for example Jones 1997; Lloyd-Smith & Tarr 2000; Jones 2001) as they have their own 'way of seeing' (Matthews, Limb & Taylor 1998: 311). In contrast to the geographies of children, the focus on children's geographies therefore highlights the need to get access to and understand children's and young people's lives from their perspectives. This has led to a call to listen to original young voices rather than relying on adult interpretations of their lives (Philo 1992; Morrow & Richards 1996; James & Prout 1997; Aitken 2001; Haudrup Christensen 2004). This call corresponds with general post-modern assumptions of the heterogeneity of people's lives and life experiences. With its focus on young people as social agents as well as on the multiple contexts they are growing up in and the constructions of childhood and youth, Children's Geographies addresses the same issues that form the centre of the new social studies of childhood as described by James and Prout (1990).

However, within 'Children's Geographies' this assumption has been taken as a starting point to reflect critically on the aim of social research, the relation between the researcher and the researched as well as the use of particular research methods. It is in this context increasingly argued that only young people themselves can give a deeper insight into their life-worlds (Alderson 1995; Alderson 2000; Lansdown 2001; Elsley 2004; Kellett et al. 2004) which

has led to an expanding number of publications focusing on the theoretical and empirical implications of defining and acknowledging young people's views and their value for research as knowledge-experts.

Both assumptions are highly interlinked with each other and form the theoretical background for the emergence of a complex debate on methodological and ethical implications of researching young people which has become the main characteristic of 'Children's Geographies' as it highlights the need not only to do research *on*, but *with* and *for* young people. To engage young people and give them a voice through the research process itself is all the more important, according to Matthews and Limb (1999), as it does not only help to overcome inequalities and address young people as experts of their own lives but has furthermore the potential to build up democratic structures in a more sustainable way (see also Lansdown 2001; Matthews 2003). Children's Geographies therefore strongly mirror feminist concerns (see e.g. Pini 2002, 2004) to uncover and challenge power imbalances that cause social inequalities.

This thesis can be situated in the context of the post-modern approach of Children's Geographies and the new social studies of childhood aiming to consider both the structural disadvantages young people are facing as well as their agency. In order to give young people a voice and give a more complex insight into young people's lives in rural East Germany, this thesis will put young people at the centre of the research. It means that they are understood as the experts of their everyday lives. Young people's experiences, their perceptions, fears and hopes will thus build the focus of the research. To further be more sensitive of the structural power imbalance between adult researcher and young researched I will follow a participatory research approach which aims to give the

participants more control over the research process (see Chapter 4). To contextualise participant's everyday lives, however, the following sections will focus on the general living conditions that characterise young people's lives in second modernity.

2.2 Young people's lives in second modernity

Beck's (2000, 2002), Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (2002) and Giddens' (1990, 1991, 1994, 2000) theoretical work on individualisation and the development of a second modernity has become an important reference for youth research and youth studies in sociology and geography, both in the German (Evans et al. 1999; Deutsche Shell 2002; Zinnecker et al. 2002; Burdewick 2003; Jentsch 2004; Deutsche Shell 2006) and Anglo-American context (Griffin 2001; Valentine 2003; Jentsch & Shucksmith 2004; France 2007; Furlong & Cartmel 2007; Roche et al. 2007). The combination of youth studies and globalization theories is described as valuable as it forms the basis to relate micro-empirical studies of youth culture to wider social structures (Pilkington 1994; Griffin 2001). Although Beck's description of second modernity as a classless society has been criticised (Furlong & Cartmel 1997; Müller 1997, 1998) it is argued that the general characterization which Beck and Beck-Gernsheim as well as Giddens give for contemporary life conditions are highly valuable as these authors "have been successful in identifying processes of individualization and risk which characterize late modernity and which have implications for lived experiences" (Furlong and Cartmel 1997: 2). Their work thus provides the wider theoretical framework that allows the examination of Murdoch and Pratt's (1993) assertion that structures as well as voices are

important in the understanding of young people's rural lives. This thesis aims to critically investigate the potential and limitation of Beck's, Beck-Gernsheim's and Giddens' theoretical work to understand young people's everyday lives in rural East Germany. It, thus, follows Shucksmith's (2004:56) call to develop these theories further "to capture the reality of people's choices in differing circumstances".

The following sections will elaborate Beck's, Beck-Gernsheim's and Giddens' understanding of the living conditions in second modernity and the interplay between structure and agency. This sets the theoretical basis to contextualise young people's everyday lives. To analyse young people's socio-spatial identity construction in the present day world it is necessary, however, to work with a conceptualization of 'place' which acknowledges the multiple power-relations that affect young people's everyday lives and that often go far beyond the local environment. Beck, Beck-Gernsheim and Giddens offer a valuable starting point for the meaning of place in second modernity in highlighting the dialectical relationship between the global and the local. Beck (2000) argues that transformations of localities represent the key dimension through which the global needs to be understood and thus reinforces the meaning of place in second modernity. It is this call for a focus on the transformation of localities which this thesis aims to follow.

However, neither Beck nor Giddens offer guidance on how to follow their call to research the global through the local. That is why I will introduce Massey's (1993, 2005) 'progressive understanding of place' which offers a more elaborated framework to conceptually reconstruct and empirically research people's lives within the present-day world as it overcomes the global-local dichotomy and combines the dimensions of structure and agency. I will further

discuss how the 'rural' is conceptualised in second modernity and draw on Panelli's (2002) work which gives an overview of the multiple power relations in which rural young people are engaged. Focusing on young people's negotiations captures both their experiences of structural forms of inclusion and exclusion as well as their agency in challenging or (re)producing these. This more dynamic approach helps to uncover the complex power-geometries that characterise young people's everyday lives and offers a valuable framework to analyse practically young people's socio-spatial identity construction.

It will be particularly interesting to analyse how young people in a rural post-socialist region describe experiences of risks and uncertainties as well as new chances and choices. In how far do they connect such experiences with the post-socialist transformation process and which aspects do they thus perceive as advantages or disadvantages of their East German residency?

2.2.1 Conditions of second modernity

Giddens (1990, 1994, 2000) highlights that our present-day world is the outcome of the consequences of modernity and therefore should be labelled as 'high-modernity'. Similar to this, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) refer to 'second modernity' as a direct outcome of first modernity, which is from their point of view challenged by four developments: individualization; globalization as an economic, sociological and cultural phenomenon; increasing underemployment/unemployment; and an ecological crisis.

Giddens and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim point out that living in the present-day world is connected with massive changes for the self as a consequence of wider globalisation processes including changes with regard to

the welfare state, increasing labour market insecurities and the loss of former traditional bindings. The authors highlight that *choice* has become a fundamental component of people's everyday life³. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002: 169) have characterised young people's lives in the second modernity as follows:

"We are dealing with 'freedom's children', for whom the traditional patent remedies for living together (in marriage, parenthood, family, class and nation) have lost their practicability".

Beck (1992) refers to processes of individualization which can be understood as an increasing possibility for people to change their own life situations and biographical patterns as social classes and family connections loose their former normative bindings. Young people therefore are in the position to choose from a range of different lifestyles, subcultures and identities so that "the individual himself or herself becomes the reproduction unit for the social in the life world" (Beck 1992: 130).

It means that the self "has to be created and recreated on a more active basis than before" (Giddens 2000: 47) and has become a 'reflexive project' (Giddens 1994) for which the individual as an active agent has become responsible. The individual thus plays an important role in the construction of his/her own identity which makes reflexively organised life-planning increasingly important (Giddens 1994).

Although the notion of choice could lead to the assumption of the autonomous individual, Beck and Giddens are far from joining this neoliberal idea. Rather they refer to the double edged character of the modern world in not

³ For further information see critical discussion of Beck's individualization thesis within the German context (Schnell & Kohler 1995; Müller 1997; Otte 1997; Müller 1998; Otte 1998).

only highlighting the new opportunities for humankind but also its 'dark and threatening aspects' (Giddens 1991: 209). As Giddens (2000: 7) argues, people in the present-day world are facing risks which no one has ever faced before: "For better or worse, we are being propelled into a global order that no one fully understands, but which is making its effects felt upon all of us". He therefore defines risk as one of the basic characteristics of the globalised world, pointing out that we do not only have to face external risks coming from the outside but also manufactured risks which were and are created by the impact of our developing knowledge upon the world.

In pointing out the different dimensions of risks in the present-day world Giddens directly refers to Beck's (1992) notion of the 'risk society' and his idea of the 'rise of risk' in the second modernity. These new risks are no longer bound to clearly defined social classes or nation states but affect everybody's lives. Beck (ibid.) thus points out that the externalisation of risk is no longer possible because it is increasingly apparent that many hazards are a by-product of the same techno-scientific rationality that initially promised progress, development, and safety. With this notion of the social production of risk Beck, like Giddens, gives a good illustration of the interwoven linkages between social structures and human agency.

In addition, Beck, Beck-Gernsheim and Giddens also highlight that it would be oversimplified to understand the new freedom of choice solely as liberation for the individual. They rather highlight, that the increasingly demanded individualisation can also be perceived as a burden people have to cope with on an individual level (see also Walkerdine 2003; Lehmann 2004). Considering that experiences of structural inequalities are increasingly interpreted as personal failures (see Beck 2002; Shucksmith 2004) it thus

indicates the pressures young people have to cope with in creating their own biographies. These pressures produce the characteristic feeling of living in the second modernity: the feeling of insecurity which becomes part of people's every day life: "(m)odernity confronts the individual with a complex diversity of choices and, because it is non-foundational, at the same time offers little help as to which options should be selected" (Giddens 1994: 80).

Life from this point of view becomes a matter of personal decision while no clear guidelines are offered which help the individual to cope with these choices. The individual can therefore also be referred to as the 'victim of individualization' (Beck & Willms 2004) as "(t)he normal biography thus becomes the 'elective biography', the 'reflexive biography', the 'do-it-yourself' biography. This does not necessarily happen by choice, neither does it necessarily succeed" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002: 3).

The loss of traditional bindings, for example, can allow people to decide their own pathways more freely. However, it can also contribute to an experience of uncertainty that the individual has to face (see Brake und Büchner 1996; Furlong and Cartmel 1996; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). The authors thus point out, that no guarantee can be given on how to build up a successful biography as no rules or strategies exist which define how to put this project into practice. Giddens (1994:80) even highlights that the diversity of choices people have to face living in high modernity can be causing fundamental identity problems, because "it is non-foundational, at the same time offers little help as to which options should be selected". This can lead to the feeling of personal meaninglessness which Giddens sees as a fundamental psychic problem in circumstances of late modernity.

The thesis will analyse whether young people in rural East Germany refer to increasingly complex diversity of choices as described by Giddens and Beck and Beck Gernsheim. Further, do they perceive such choices as the outcome of the reunification process or do they connect them with more general changes of people's lives in second modernity? And in how far does their rural residency affect their experiences and perceptions? Considering, for example, that traditional gender relations are often still more dominant than in urban contexts and that gender relations in East Germany might still be influenced by former socialist understandings (see further discussion in Chapter 3) it has to be questioned whether participants' experiences reflect a loss of traditional bindings as described by the authors. It will also be questioned as to how far such new opportunities to build up their own biographies are perceived as individual freedom or as a burden.

2.2.2 How to survive the rat-race?

With regard to the question how people prepare themselves and cope with experiences of new uncertainties and risks as well as the permanent self-invention, Giddens (1994) has developed the idea of a 'protective cocoon' which guards the self and deals with the complex choices of everyday reality. This 'cocoon', according to Giddens (1994: 54), "filters out the dangers which in principle threaten the integrity of the self" and is developed through childhood. Giddens argues that this 'mantle of trust' goes back to the very first trust-relationship between a child and its caretaker and forms the basis of our 'practical consciousness' which "together with the day-to-day routines reproduced by it, help bracket such anxieties not only (...) because of the social

stability that they imply, but because of their constitutive role in organising an 'as if' environment in relation to existential issues" (Giddens 1994: 37). It therefore provides not only cognitive but also emotional modes of orientation for people's everyday life.

Following this idea of the development of a 'protective cocoon' within the early days of childhood one could conclude that people whose relationship to their caretakers can be described as a problematic one have more problems in coping with the complexity of contemporary modern life. This psychological explanation of Giddens did not receive much attention within the discussion on identity construction in a globalised world, probably because it overlaps with psychological interests and is still too vaguely elaborated to refer to. It further reduces the discussion about the emergence of new social disadvantages to a purely individual level which runs the risk of neglecting the wider context people are living in. Giddens' aim to combine structural forces and human agency is not reflected in his idea of the protective cocoon. It rather indicates that Giddens constructs children as human 'becomings' rather than human beings which means that he neglects to acknowledge children as agents in their own right.

Beck's and Beck-Gernsheim's (2002) seem to refer to a slightly different understanding of childhood and youth. They proclaim that we are all 'freedom's children' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002: 157) and thus discuss the situation of children only very generally in the context of the new risks and choices pointing out that (young) people are now confronted with completely new global situations and problems. Young people are thus described as being part of the new generation which has to face the new risks and uncertainties rather than social agents who have their own way of perceiving and experiencing the world.

Thus no distinction is made between children's and young people's life experiences and those of adults.

To explain how people cope with new risks and opportunities, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002: 23) refer to the need of new skills or competencies which help people to respond to the ever changing world we are living in and to benefit from the emerging choices:

"And the ubiquitous rule is that, in order to survive that rat race, one has to become active, inventive and resourceful, to develop ideas of one's own, to be faster, nimbler and more creative – not just on one occasion, but constantly, day after day."

In referring to the daily life as a 'rat race' the quote recalls Darwin's idea of the survival of the fittest, an analogy which is even strengthened through the reference to specific skills which are needed and which can be summarized as individual skills of flexibility and creativity. To respond to the ever changing world and to construct one's own biography, active engagement of the individual is necessary.

The reference to concrete individual skills can be found in various descriptions of the so called 'modern child' and include qualifications such as: time management, team-work skills, conflict-management and communicative skills as well as experience in using different information systems (Büchner et al. 1996). Fuhs (1996) has further argued that the representatives and users of the modern child-culture are mainly children with a higher social status as they have the freedom to use their leisure time to gain the skills mentioned above.

These assumptions fit into the wider discussion of the winners of the second modernity which identifies the cosmopolitans as the 'new class'. 'Cosmopolitans', according to Hannerz (1990), will be on the winning side of the

second modernity as they are equipped with decontextualised cultural capital (Hannerz 1990: 246). This idea of the 'new class' goes back to the assumption that individuals in a globalised world have to position themselves in relation to an increasing pluralisation of cultures and therefore need to develop cosmopolitan competences. This concept runs the risk, however, of describing and privileging the experiences of cultural elites and comes dangerously close to defining globalization as an elite-phenomenon. Although neither Beck and Beck-Gernsheim nor Giddens have used the expression of 'winners' and 'losers', Beck has similarly to Giddens (1994) warned against the "misleading impression that everyone can take equal advantage of mobility and modern communications, and that transnationality has been liberatory for all people" (Beck 2002: 31). This implies that people do not profit or suffer equally from the new chances and risks of second modernity.

Despite their structural causes these inequalities are, according to Beck (2002), increasingly experienced and perceived as personal failure which individuals try to overcome on a personal level. Beck (2002) exemplifies this by referring to the consequences of German reunification. Although reunification has led to increasing unemployment rates and poverty, these social inequalities are now rather explained through personal failure and are reduced to personal experiences than through broader social structures which overlooks still existent structural causes for social inequalities (Beck 2002: 47). This means that social exclusion is 'collectively individualised' (see Beck 2000) which corresponds with empirical results of Furlong and Cartmel's (1997) work on life experiences of young people in modern industrialized societies as 'a wider range of pathways to choose from' gives young people the impression that their own route is

'unique' (ibid: 7) and that they are responsible for their personal success or failure.

With regard to young people's lives in rural East Germany it will be important to analyse which skills and competencies participants identify as crucial to cope with perceived risks and uncertainties and what options they have to gain such skills. Considering the dramatic socio-economic changes and, for example, the decline of youth services in rural East German regions (see Chapter 1) participants might face structural disadvantages in preparing themselves for an increasingly uncertain and ever changing world. If these structural disadvantages are interpreted as the outcome of personal failure as described by Beck (2002) it should be analysed what impact this has on the strategies young people develop to overcome such disadvantages.

2.2.3 Addressing inequalities in the second modernity

Although Beck and Giddens describe general living conditions in second modernity they fail to explain why some people suffer or benefit more from new risks and opportunities than others. Wyness (2006) has criticised that the neglect of children and young people as social agents is characteristic of post-modern sociological theories. He identifies the need to close theoretically and empirically the still existing gap between children's and young people's life worlds and the construction of childhood and youth. Büchner (1996) has similarly argued that theories of the second or high modernity often neglect the multiple socio-cultural and socio-spatial contexts young people are living in and thus neglect the heterogeneity of children's geographies. It is therefore necessary not only to understand and describe the general structures which

characterise young people's lives in second modernity but furthermore to elaborate the multiple differentiations of young people's experiences, perceptions and negotiations of their daily lives. Such analysis will give a deeper insight into the multiple processes of social inclusion and exclusion that characterise young people's everyday lives as well as young people's agency.

In line with this, Shucksmith (2004: 47) has argued that "Beck's theory of individualisation, like Giddens' related theories of late modernity, is total, in the sense that it is applied to everywhere and to everyone". Beck and Giddens have further been criticised for ignoring the continuing influence of social structure and thus the still existing patterns of inequality in second modernity (Furlong & Cartmel 1997; Evans 2002; Lehmann 2004; Shucksmith 2004; Hörschelmann & Schäfer 2005; Sharland 2006; Wyness 2006; Hörschelmann & Schäfer 2007).

Recent geographical work has addressed this critique by aiming to give a more complex insight into the ways globalisation processes affect young people's everyday lives. This research has mainly focused on the use of media, music and of new technologies like the internet which corresponds with Appadurai's (1990) understanding of *media- and technoscapes*. O'Connor (2005), for example, has analysed sporting and media activities in Ireland arguing that although many aspects of young people's lives draw on global products, they remain deeply embedded within local contexts which are structured by age and gender and confirm youth cultures as the products of interaction in which both local and global influences matter (see also Katz 1993, 1994; Massey 1998).

Focusing on the use of information and computer technology (ICT) within everyday spaces Holloway and Valentine (2000) showed that the spatial disciplining as well as gender specific pattern shaped children's use of ICT

within the institutional context of schools. At the same time, however, children were active in the creation of their own spaces of computing (Holloway & Valentine 2000) which empirically demonstrates that children are not only affected by globalisation, but do also construct their own understandings of and responses to 'global changes' and therefore challenge them from their local context. Laegran (2002) further showed that rural internet cafes were used and perceived very differently by young people in rural Norway. If and how young people used the internet corresponded, according to Laegran (2002), mainly to their social status and lifestyles. That means that access to new technologies were valued and used very differently by young people, which might become an important aspect when analysing why some young people profit from the new chances more than others.

The results from these recent studies indicate that individualisation is an *uneven* process and that young people's experiences are continually shaped by dimensions such as class, gender and spatial inequalities (Furlong & Cartmel 1997; Lehmann 2004; Shucksmith 2004). Social class, for example, still plays an important role in how young people perceive and cope with increasing choices and uncertainties. This is supported by research findings that focus on young people's *ethnoscapes*. Deforges (1998) for example showed that the experience of travelling is valued by middle class youth in particular as a possibility to increase their job opportunities. In accordance to this, Hörschelmann and Schäfer (2005) have highlighted in their study on urban young people's lives in Leipzig (East Germany) that travel experiences can become sources of intercultural skills which put young people in an advantaged position in society. However, travelling is neither accessible to everybody nor is it automatically perceived as a source for personal benefit. *How* travelling is

valued is strongly related to the social and economic background of young people. In addition, Hörschelmann and Schäfer (2007) showed that the multiple ways how young people are positioned within global-local networks impacts on their present identities as well as their future life chances which produce new inequalities amongst them.

Foregrounding young people's perceptions and experiences, this thesis aims to give an insight into young people's everyday lives and the multiple ways through which they cope with, aim to resist and/or challenge perceived uncertainties and risks. To understand why some young people seem to benefit or suffer more from new opportunities and risks, attention will be particularly drawn on the impact of the spatial context of growing up rural and in a post-socialist region as well as on dimensions such as gender, age and educational and social background.

2.3 The meaning of space in second modernity

To research the spatial dimension of young people's everyday lives and to understand the meaning of space for young people's identity construction in second modernity, it is necessary to conceptualize the meaning of 'space'. Combining structure and agency Beck, Beck-Gernsheim and Giddens have highlighted the dialectical relation between the global and the local. It is not the intention here to provide an exhaustive summary of the complex literature on globalisation but, rather, to explore how understandings of global-local dimensions of place help to contextualise young people's lives in a rural post-socialist region. It means, although the global and issues of globalisation do not represent the focus of this thesis I will draw on this theoretical framework as it

allows to develop an understanding of place that acknowledges the importance of local as well as wider networks and spaces. Such concept of space allows analysis of the impact of wider power relations such as the post-socialist transformation process on young people's everyday lives in rural Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

Beck (2002: 23) defines the local as the key dimension to understand and reconstruct the global in that 'globalization is not about globalization'. Beck (2002: 30/31) thus emphasizes the recovering of the concept of place as "(n)ot mobility but the transformation of localities itself is the key impact on culture globalization" (see also Sassen 2000). Transnational mobility should therefore not be understood as the key global process to understand peoples' experiences of living in a globalized world as it would neglect the movement within localities like 'the home' (see also Hörschelmann & van Hoven 2003). This corresponds with Tomlinson's (1999) emphasis on the situation of people in the globalized world who are not moving but experiencing the 'displacement' that global modernity can bring to places (Tomlinson 1999: 9).

However, although Beck and Giddens argue that the global and the local cannot be thought of independently from each other and that structural forces as well as human agency need to be considered to describe and understand people's lives in the second modernity, they neither theoretically nor practically elaborate how this intertwined relationship can be analysed empirically. That is why I want to draw here on the theoretical work of Massey (1993, 2005). She calls for a more progressive understanding of place which addresses the need to overcome the global-local dichotomy in focusing on power-relations and offers guidance how to research young people's relation to spaces and places empirically. The high value and practicality of the concept of place as social

power relations is reflected in the increasing number of empirical work on young people's lives that refers to this concept (see Katz 1993, 1994; Massey 1998; McDowell 1999; Holloway & Valentine 2000; Liepins 2000a, 2000b) which corresponds with Murdoch and Pratt's (1993) call to uncover the deeper power-relations that cause marginalization and neglect.

2.3.1 A progressive concept of 'place'

Referring to the now widely acknowledged assumption of 'time-space-compression' as the most significant process in the present-day world and as a key concept in globalization theories, Massey (1993, 2005) has highlighted its effects on fundamental geographical terms as it is no longer clear what is meant by 'places' and how individuals relate to them. Therefore she calls for a more progressive understanding of place which I want to combine with Beck's, Beck-Gernsheim's and Giddens' concept of structure and agency to question empirically and analyse the causes why people suffer or benefit differently from conditions of second modernity.

Massey questions the causes of different individual responses to 'time-space compression'. She argues that it is insufficient to see capitalism as the determining force in how people experience and understand as it neglects other dimensions which influence people's experience and use of space like 'race' and 'gender' (Massey 1993). To answer the question if "we all benefit or suffer from it (the time-space-compression) the same way" Massey (1993: 233) calls for a more progressive understanding of place. This is, according to her, especially important from the geographical perspective as the globalization debate is connected to an increasing uncertainty about the meaning of 'place'

and how people in the contemporary world relate to it. It therefore touches the core category of Geography itself: the relation between humans and space.

The main strength of Massey's (1993: 239) conceptualization of 'space' and 'place' in a globalised world goes back to her definition of 'place' which "can be imagined as articulated movements in networks of social relations and understandings, but where a large proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for the moment as the place itself". This conception of space helps to overcome the misleading dichotomous conceptualisation of the 'global' and the 'local' which equates the first with movement and progress while defining the latter with the terms of stasis and reaction. The idea of the power-geometry of time-space-compression (Massey 1993, 1999, 2005) provides a theoretical background to analyse individual differentiations regarding to the degrees of mobility and differing senses of place and spaces as: "[d]ifferent social groups have distinct relationships to this anyway differentiated mobility: some people are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it" (Massey 1993: 234). It means that Massey conceptually addresses uneven regional developments as well people's different experiences and perceptions of the time-space-compression. This becomes particularly important with regard to young people's out-migration patterns in rural East Germany which seems to be affected by gender as well as young people's educational background. How do young people describe their migration plans and in how far do these reflect on experienced forms of disadvantages?

Addressing the unequal ways how (young) people are connected with the multiple power-relations that characterise their everyday lives, Massey

connects conceptual thought with a directly political aim of research highlighting the political dimension of this debate. Because, if time-space-compression is socially formed and differentiated, "then there may be here the possibility of developing a politics of mobility and access" (Massey 1993: 235). This means, people's experiences and perceptions of time-space-compression as enabling or limiting could be challenged actively. With this statement Massey integrates a critical political dimension into social research which aims to not just explain but also challenge the causes of differentiating global experiences. This corresponds with the wider call in *Children's Geographies* to address the politics of childhood (Valentine 1996).

Massey concludes that the adequate sense of place for the era of time-space-compression has to be a more global sense of the local, a 'global sense of place' (Massey 1993: 240). From this point of view the idea to define the 'modern child' or the 'winner of the second modernity' as an individual that is equipped with specific skills and competencies is misleading as it overemphasises the idea of human agency while neglecting the context and the broader socio-spatial power structures the individual is situated in and which have for example an effect on the development of special skills. This corresponds with a more critical image of 'the modern child' which Büchner (1995) refers to in highlighting the importance of children's embeddedness and participation in modern power relations.

In accordance with Massey's (1993, 2005) call for a more global sense of place, Holloway and Valentine (2000: 769f) have furthermore argued that "[g]lobal studies which fail to take into account local outcomes and responses to global processes, and local studies of children's worlds of meaning which omit an analysis of global economic and cultural influences can provide only limited

understandings of children's lives". In this context, Massey's concept builds a bridge between research which focuses on either the global or the local. This is all the more important as James et al. (1998) have critically commented that the interconnectedness between agency and structure as well as the global and the local has been overlooked in the study of children's and young people's lives.

Massey's approach rejects the assumption that places lose their significance and emphasises in accordance with McDowell (1999) that everyday life is indeed a local affair that is globally connected. This approach goes much further than Beck's, Beck-Gernsheim's and Giddens' theoretical explanations of the global-local relationship as it conceptually includes questions about people's different (self-)positioning within a global-local context. In addition, this conceptualisation of place highlights that the spatial organisation is a key element with regard to people's identity construction. Understanding space as interactive process, as particular power-geometries of social interaction, offers a conceptual framework that interlinks space and identity.

With regard to young people growing up in rural East Germany, this concept offers an opportunity to understand which impact growing up in a post-socialist region might have on their everyday lives. Understanding space as a network of social relations and understandings means for example, that discourses on the East-West German relationship and understandings of power relations on regional and national levels along these spatial dimensions can be included in the analysis.

2.3.2 Conceptualising the 'rural' in second modernity

In line with the re-conceptualisation of the meaning of space in second modernity, paradigmatic shifts within Geography have led to a major re-conceptualization of the rural (see Halfacree 1993). Following postmodernist considerations, 'rurality' is defined as a social construction which includes the 'words and concepts understood and used by people in everyday talk' (Halfacree 1993: 29). This approach puts the definition of rurality no longer down to particular statistical characteristics or to a general dichotomous concept which assumes a contrast between the rural and the urban but emphasises the importance of images and perceptions of rurality.

As Woods (2005:10) has rightly pointed out: "whatever academics might say about the difficulty of defining 'rural areas', there are still millions of people who consider themselves to be 'rural', to live in 'rural areas', and to follow a 'rural way of life'". This post-modern awareness of the social construction of rurality is reflected in the focus on the different discourses of rurality from the perspective of its residents. The 'rural' thus "becomes a world of social, moral and cultural values in which rural dwellers participate" (Cloke & Milbourne 1992: 360), which Murdoch and Pratt (1993) have referred to as 'post rural'. With this term, Murdoch and Pratt (ibid.) highlight the need to overcome universal understandings of the 'rural' through focusing on the power relations that characterise places and the meanings people connect with them to understand how places are made.

Highlighting that the countryside is a social and cultural construction, Murdoch (2003, p. 274) argues: "countryside places are 'meeting places', where diverse socio-spatial relations become juxtaposed with one another". This

includes the recognition of existing preconceived ideas about 'rurality' which are transmitted through media, literature (see Jones 1997; Matthews 2000) and individual life experiences. This produces a specific 'knowledge' about the rural and what it means to be rural (Woods 2005) with effect on people's attitudes and behaviour. This concept of 'rural' reflects Massey's progressive understanding of space as the focus is on the specific power relations that characterise people's everyday lives as well as on the wider context of meanings and values that are connected with the image of 'rural life'. In accordance with this post-modern approach social scientists have started to examine how 'rurality' is constructed by different groups and marginalised 'others' and how this affects their identity construction and lifestyles. It has gradually opened the way for research that is sensitive to and includes rural young people's needs and views though much more work is needed.

Particularly with regard to the globalization debate it seems that the 'rural-urban' relation is still equated with the dichotomous understanding of the 'local' and the 'global' as the 'rural' has rarely been included in the considerations of global change. That means that the 'countryside' and people's rural everyday lives are not yet part of the wider globalization debate. This seems to falsely suggest that globalization is an urban experience (Woods 2005).

Mirroring Woods critical comment, Nederveen Pieterse (2004) has pointed out that hybridization of culture in which the local and the translocal or global are intrinsically tied together to produce new cultural practices, should not be misinterpreted as a solely urban phenomenon. He rather argues that "[f]armers and peasants throughout the world are wired, direct or indirect, to the fluctuations of global commodity prices that affect their economies and decision-

making. The ecologies of agriculture may be local, but the cultural resources are translocal" (Nederveen Pieterse 2004: 54). Although Nederveen Pieterse focuses on the aspect of agriculture, referring to economical changes on the countryside, it should be highlighted that this represents only one dimension of the global-local interrelations in rural environments.

Besides these features of economic globalization, which also include the influence through the globalization of trade, the rise of global corporations, a growing significance of global regulatory frameworks, technological and cultural developments have to be taken into account as they are effecting the daily life and cultural practice of people's' lives. Technical developments include features such as the increasing possibility to travel across the globe, mass migration, net in-migration through counter urbanization, rise of global tourism while cultural globalization refers to the rise of global media and global mass culture reflected in the consumption of TV, literature and music, as well as wider process of globalization of values (see Woods 2005, 2007).

To understand (young) people's' lives it is therefore necessary to overcome the apparently still dominant and misleading dichotomous concept of the rural as local and the urban as global as hybridization is not solely an urban phenomenon (Murdoch 2003; Nederveen Pieterse 2004; Woods 2005, 2007). In line with Massey (1993, 2005) Woods (2005, 2007) has further argued that this is only possible when globalization is understood and analysed as power processes. He calls for a more 'plural geographical analysis of globalization' (ibid. 2005) which allows to identify different processes of globalization that have greater or lesser significance in different localities and to analyse how new hybrid spaces are developed. This does not mean that globalization is seen as 'all powerful' as Woods (2005, 2007) gives examples of rural resistance. Local

places thus should be understood as “not simply always [being] the victims of the global; nor are they always politically defensible redoubts against the global” (Woods 2007:498).

In this context it becomes clear that there is a need to emphasise on both a theoretical debate as well as empirical research which reconnects rural Geography with the globalization debate and analyses the countryside from a global-local perspective. This thesis seeks to incorporate the insights of social constructionism by exploring how young people’s perceptions of the ‘rural’ influence their socio-spatial identities, while remaining aware of the importance of wider structural conditions.

2.3.3 Growing up in post-socialist Germany

An important context that might affect young people’s socio-spatial identity construction in rural East German is that of growing up in a post-socialist country. As already discussed (see Chapter 1) young people growing up in rural East Germany face additional disadvantages and uncertainties due to dramatic socio-economic changes since reunification in 1990. Post-socialist countries are generally perceived as outside of the (western) ‘core’ (Pilkington 2004) and are often neglected in the debate on globalization processes. Critical voices (see Hörschelmann 2001; Hörschelmann 2002; Pilkington et al. 2002; Pilkington 2004; Stenning 2005; Stenning & Hörschelmann 2008) have warned not to understand the post-socialist transformation process as a one-way process to ‘capitalism’ but rather as a “complex process that fits uneasily into pre-given categories and disrupt an ordering logic that divides between a western, postmodern ‘us’ and ‘the rest’ of the world” (Hörschelmann 2002: 52). Similar to

this, Stenning (2005: 123) has highlighted that “contemporary experiences of post-socialism are shaped as much by earlier structures and practices as they are by the more recent processes of marketization which they partially share with other parts of the world”.

The few empirical studies (see Riordan et al. 1995; Machacek 1997; Smith 1998; Roberts et al. 2000; Hörschelmann 2002; Pilkington et al. 2002; Pilkington & Johnson 2003; Pilkington 2004; Hörschelmann & Schäfer 2005) which have focused on young people's lives in the context of post-socialism showed, that values and norms developed in the past, as well as in the context of transformation continue to be relevant for how people experience and interpret present conditions. These findings thus challenge the perception of post-socialism as “a temporary, transitional category with no power beyond a limited historical and geographical moment” (Stenning 2005: 113).

Working on Russian young people, Pilkington and Johnson (2003), for example, found that non-western and post-socialist societies in particular increasingly open up for western-influences. Their empirical results indicate, however, that the “familiarity with the West does not necessarily imply acceptance of it” which means that “Western goods or messages do not have a universality or seductive power capable of overcoming all local differences” (Pilkington & Johnson 2003: 272). Pilkington (2004: 129) further concluded that “Western music and style preferences were important for many, but the fact that the latter could be found among both groups [of young people], did not explain how young people come to adopt ‘progressive’ or ‘normal’ strategies”.

That young people are responding and actively challenging structural conditions and global influences has also been highlighted by the work of Smith (1998) who focused on forms of resistance in the daily life of young people that

grew up in the GDR as well as young people's lives after the German reunification. In accordance to Pilkington (1994) she argues that "simply analysing youth cultures in eastern Europe as a poor relation of western youth cultures is to miss their significance in reflecting the forces that shaped them and in shaping their societies" (Smith 1998: 290). With regard to young people's lives in the GDR Smith (1998) gives an insight into the multiple forms of active or passive resistance that were practiced by the young in the GDR while young people were seen as the 'constructors of communism' and the 'victims of western influence' in the dominant context (Smith 1998: 296f). This changed, however, with the collapse of the socialist state. After reunification of Germany young people became "a prime agent of consumption and, in particular, as a 'problem', in relation to crime, drugs, political extremism and the use of urban space" (Smith 1998: 297).

Such one-sided picture still dominates the public and academic German discourse which only a few qualitative studies aimed to challenge. One exception is a research project on young people's identity construction and cultural practice conducted by Hörschelmann and Schäfer (2005). Interviewing young people in the city of Leipzig (East Germany), this case study elaborates the multiple geographies of the young living in East Germany and gives a more complex insight into the wide range of experiences that characterise young people's lives in an East German city. It helps to question more critically who will be on the 'winning' or 'losing' side with regard to opportunities and uncertainties that are connected with global change and refers back to the differently developed skills, social background, gender and age as dominant aspects of differentiation.

As the process of post-socialist transformation is very often understood as a process of assimilation and catching up with western societies (Young & Light 2001; Hörschelmann 2002), these studies emphasise the dimension of resistance which characterizes the global-local relation in young people's lives. Reminding of Beck and Giddens understanding of 'individualization' and 'reflexivity' Pilkington (2004) has described this relation as follows: "global-local positions are mobilized reflexively by young people alongside other markers of difference (gender, race, social status) in the production of distinct youth cultural strategies that not only reflect young people's origins, but also help to negotiate their presents and imagine their futures" (Pilkington 2004: 133).

The results of the empirical studies on young people's lives thus indicate that there is a need for greater recognition of the creative and resistive practices of people's everyday lives in post-socialist societies (Burawoy & Verdery 1999; Hörschelmann 2002; Pilkington et al. 2002; Pilkington & Johnson 2003; Pilkington 2004; Stenning 2005). These young people seem to draw benefits from their residence in a minority state and are yet disadvantaged by their structural marginality within it (see Schäfer 2007). It is therefore necessary to elaborate to what extent young people's life is affected by the post-socialist transformation process.

I want to argue that this also needs to be considered with regard to young people that were born just before, during or after the actual reunification of the two German states in 1990 and who build the focus of this research study. Although they have not lived in the GDR themselves, the life-conditions they grow up in are still characterised by a number of processes which are directly related to the post-socialist transformation process. These include disadvantages such as: higher unemployment rates and still lower wages than

in West Germany, poor infrastructure, poor job opportunities as well as poor services and leisure facilities for young people in the countryside in particular. Above this young people might have developed an image of what it was like to live in the GDR through narratives of their parents and grandparents as well as through the experience of still existent customs and behaviours which refer back to the socialist socialisation of their parents. Such images might have implications on how they perceive and experience disadvantages and how they perceive their own present day and future choices.

Young people's understandings of what it means to grow up in East Germany need to be analysed. Do they perceive themselves as East Germans? And what do they connect with such characterisation? How do they experience processes of transformation and how do they perceive disadvantages that characterise their everyday lives? It also needs to be questioned, how young people position themselves within the East-West German context and if they (re)produce the perception of still existing fundamental East-West German differences that still dominate the general public discourse in Germany. What impact does this have on young people's feelings of belonging as well as their own future plans?

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the need to give young people a voice and to see them as social agents in their own right. Following Philo's (1992) call to give marginalized young people a voice, this thesis focuses on young people's experiences and perceptions of their everyday lives. In line with Murdoch and Pratt (1993) it has been argued, however, that it is essential to consider the

multiple power relations and thus the contexts young people are growing up in. To aim for a more contextual approach of giving young people a voice, Beck's, Beck-Gernsheims' and Giddens' theoretical work was introduced to describe the general living conditions that characterise people's lives in second modernity. While these authors offer valuable insights into the new choices and risks people are facing in modern western countries and people's identity construction in second modernity, it could be shown that further theoretical and empirical work is needed to conceptualise and analyse the inequalities of the individualisation process. In other words: it still needs to be understood why young people profit or suffer differently from new choices and risks.

To address young people as social agents and the heterogeneity of their everyday lives it is important to understand how they themselves perceive risks and uncertainties. Empirical research has shown that rural East German regions have experienced fundamental changes since reunification in 1990 and are still facing socio-economic disadvantages. Young people have in this context been described as the 'losers of reunification'. It has been argued, however, that this understanding neglects to acknowledge young people as social agents. Further, it refers to the assumption that post-socialist transformation processes are one-way processes to capitalism. This, however, neglects that norms and values which were developed in the socialist pasts are still relevant for people's lives. In addition, it fails to acknowledge the creative and resistive practices of people's everyday lives in post-socialist countries. That is why the meaning young people connect with the post-socialist transformation process as well as their understanding of probably still existing differences between the Eastern and Western part might be crucial to their everyday life experiences.

With regard to growing up within a rural environment it has further been shown that young people's perceptions of the rural need to be considered to fully understand the impact of their rural residency on their everyday lives. Woods' (2005, 2007) critique that the rural has been excluded from globalisation processes further supports Massey's (1993, 2005) call to consider the multiple power relations that characterise young people's every day lives and that often go far beyond their local environment. To fully understand how young people experience and perceive everyday risks and opportunities it will be necessary to analyse which disadvantage or advantages they connect with their rural and which to their East German residency. Only by analysing if they distinguish between these spatial dimensions will it be possible to get an insight into their understanding of space and how it affects their everyday lives.

The following chapter will thus review empirical research findings on the meaning of growing up rural and growing up in a post-socialist region.

CHAPTER 3

Growing up rural: previous empirical findings on young people's rural lives.

3. Introduction

It has been shown in the previous chapter that Beck's (1992, 2000, 2002), Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (2002) and Giddens' (1990, 1991, 1994, 2000) theoretical considerations about the conditions of second modernity and its impact on people's everyday lives offers a valuable framework to understand notions of new choices and risks and processes of identity formation. It has been argued, however, that these authors draw an over-generalised picture of individualisation processes which does not help to get an insight into the heterogeneity of young people's everyday lives and geographies. Therefore, a more progressive understanding of space (Massey 1993, 2005) is needed which focuses on the multiple power relations that characterise the meaning of space for young people's lives in second modernity. Analysing the power-geometries might offer a better understanding of the meaning of space in second modernity and provide insights into the reasons why some young people seem to benefit more from new chances and opportunities than others. It thus might offer a way of theorising unequal individualisation processes which Beck, Beck-Gernsheim and Giddens work fails to address sufficiently.

Having developed the wider theoretical frame within which this research is situated this chapter will focus on accounts of research about the meaning of space with regard to young people's lives. The chapter will identify different dimension of power-relations that characterise young people experiences within

a rural context and discuss how previous research has addressed these issues and which conclusions can be drawn from this. I will particularly focus on research which has been conducted in a rural and/or post-socialist context. It will become clear, however, that young people's lives in post-socialist countries have been mainly neglected and that findings from other rural European regions might not easily capture their everyday life experiences and the contexts they are growing up in.

To identify empirically the multiple power-relations that characterise participants' everyday lives I will employ Panelli's (2002) dimensions of negotiations which capture the wide range of contexts that characterise rural young people's everyday lives and highlights the importance of their agency. Panelli follows Massey's (1993) call for a more progressive understanding of place, in focusing on the multiple power-relations that characterise young people's everyday lives. This theoretical framework thus offers guidance on how to practically research the spatial dimension of young people's everyday lives, as well as a more conceptual approach to identify the complexity of their life experiences. It thus helps to address the main aims of the thesis:

1. to examine their understanding, experience and meaning of space with regard to their rural residency and
2. to analyse how they perceive and experience the post-socialist transformation process. Further it offers a way to
3. to acknowledge young people's agency to determine their life chances within the structures that characterise their everyday lives.

It should be highlighted, however, that the dimensions of negotiations are highly interlinked with each other.

3.1 Contextual analysis of rural young people's everyday lives in second modernity

Panelli (2002) has developed five dimensions of negotiation which describe the complex and dynamic strategies that characterise young people's rural lives and captures their experiences of inclusion, exclusion as well as forms of negotiation. Her dimensions of young people's rural life include a more 'global sense of place' that acknowledge influences and effects that go beyond the actual space of the rural community which helps to understand the impact of wider power relations on young people's everyday lives. These strategies of negotiation include (Panelli 2002: 118ff):

- *Negotiation of rural knowledge*: this refers to young people's construction of own meanings of rurality, which are built on their experiences, social relations and discourses they are embedded in and can also be connected with links that go beyond the rural area. I have already pointed out how important it is to listen to young people's own perception and meanings of the 'rural' as they might differ from the adult-led discourses of 'rurality'.
- *Negotiation of rural work*: in reference to young people as workers this dimension highlights the "broader social, cultural and spatial relations with which they are engaged" (Panelli 2003: 118) and refers, for example, to gender specific expectations and work patterns, spatial access to job opportunities and so forth.

- *Negotiation of rural social relations*: this dimension captures the social relations that constitute young people's rural experiences including family, peer, gender and age-related relations that "shape young people's experience of schooling, work and future lifestyles in or beyond rural settings" (Panelli 2003: 119). It highlights young people's personal and emotional bindings to their rural environment and the effect on their present and future life that includes for example migration pattern.
- *Negotiations of political areas*: this refers to experiences of exclusion and/or inclusion and participation within social and political institutions, community bodies and so forth and young people's responses to this. In this context empirical research has highlighted that young people often do not feel included in political processes of decision-making (see Matthews et al. 2000, Matthews 2001). It should be questioned if this is the case within my research area and how young people think about it.
- *Negotiation of rural space*: This dimension covers the field of young people's construction of places and spaces that matches their lifestyles. This might include specific places within and beyond the rural community like, for example, 'hyper realities' (see Laegran 2002) that are accessed through the internet (Panelli 2003). I will argue that these constructions of space are not only affected by specific power relations between adults and youth but also by power relations among young people.

These dimensions of negotiation represent different forms of power relations that young people are engaged in and that characterize their daily-life-spaces. Focusing on 'negotiations' rather than solely on forms of inclusion or exclusion, this approach helps to uncover the power-geometries

that give an insight into the deeper power-relations of rural young people's lives while addressing young people as social agents who actively negotiate, challenge and/or (re)construct these power relations.

Although Panelli (see also Holloway and Valentine 2000a, Massey 1993) refers to the influence of 'places' that lie beyond the rural community, research on rural young people's lives has mainly focused on young people's use of public spaces within such communities. Rural communities certainly need to be seen as a major dimension of young people's rural lives (see also Jones 1999; Ní Laoire 2000; Panelli et al. 2002; Glendinning et al. 2003). However, analysing young people's use of rural spaces and their relationships to other rural residents without reflecting on their embeddedness in power-relations that go beyond the local environment runs the risk of treating rural life as marked off from the wider context it is embedded in (see Chapter 2). More importantly, however, analysing either local or global aspects of young people's everyday lives runs the risk of overlooking processes which cannot easily be captured in these categories such as post-socialist transformation processes which need to be understood with regard to local, regional and national implications as well. A more progressive concept of space is thus needed to understand how growing up in a post-socialist region affects young people's everyday lives.

There is a gap between theoretical debates and actual empirical research on the wider networks that characterise young people's lives in an increasingly changing and flexible world. Only in considering and analysing the complexity of power relation which include those that reach beyond the local environment will it be possible to include rural young people growing up in post-socialist contexts in the discussion on how people are living in second modernity, and to understand how they experience and cope with new choices, risks and

uncertainties and how they construct their own biography (Beck & Gernsheim 2002, Giddens 1994). Such analysis will give insight into the multiple strategies, competencies and skills young people (need to) develop to live in an increasingly uncertain and changing world. This will matter profoundly for their future life as it is strongly connected with the question who suffers or benefits more from the new chances and uncertainties (see Furlong & Cartmel 1997; Beck & Beck Gernsheim 2002; Valentine 2003). Panelli's (2002) dimensions of negotiation represent an approach which helps to uncover why young people are more advantaged or disadvantaged than others.

In the following sections I discuss empirical research which has focused on young people's everyday lives in second modernity within the rural context. Relevant research findings within the area of rural young people's lives will be discussed along Panelli's dimensions of negotiation. Following this model helps to highlight, which dimensions of young people's everyday lives have been addressed in previous research within the context of growing up rural and where research gaps can be identified which this thesis aims to address.

3.1.1 Negotiation of rural knowledge

In accordance with Valentine (1996) I argue that the way we construct the 'rural' affects our understanding of youth and childhood (and thus our research) as it is always connected with normative expectations what it means to be a 'countryside girl' or 'boy'. To close the gap between the construction of youth and the heterogeneity of their everyday lives (see Wyness 2006) it is important to understand how participants experience and understand 'rurality' and the meaning of growing up rural. In the following I will identify dominant constructions of 'rurality' highlighting its implications of studying young people's

lives. It should be questioned in how far participant's experiences are captured by these constructions of the rural and in how far previous research findings can help to understand young people's lives in rural East Germany.

To contextualise young people's lives in rural areas I will firstly discuss dominant images of the 'rural' in referring to the 'rural idyll' that draws the picture of a harmonic and unproblematic rural childhood/youth. While this idyllic picture is still dominating the general discourse on rural childhood, a growing body of research shows that young people's rural experiences do include multiple forms of exclusion that do not fit into this image. I want to argue, however, that the focus on the 'marginalized rural' and the 'marginalized young' does not include young people's agency sufficiently and therefore reduces young people to a uniform group of powerless 'others'. This neglects to acknowledge young people as social agents who do not only suffer from (adult) restrictions but who are also able to 'negotiate' (Panelli 2002) and thus resist and challenge forms of exclusion. Young people's lives are characterized by experiences of exclusion *and* inclusion, participation, cooperation and resistance. I will further argue that 'rurality' might be constructed differently in rural, European contexts and particularly in rural post-socialist regions.

3.1.1.1 Being young in the countryside: dominant images of the 'rural'

In the following I will discuss the dominant images and perceptions of the countryside to elaborate their effect on young people's lives and their socio-spatial identity construction in more detail. This will lay the ground for an analysis of processes of exclusion, inclusion and negotiation that characterise

rural young people's lives as it uncovers the multiple networks young people are engaged in.

In Britain, one of the most popular and influential discourses constructed around the notion of rurality is that of the rural idyll. It represents the picture of an idealized rurality which is described as peaceful and safe (see Short 1991; Little & Austin 1996; Jones, 1997; Francis 1999). In accordance with this the countryside is often perceived as a particularly good and inclusive environment for young people to grow up in (Nairn et al. 2003). Referring to the close knit community it is associated with a strong sense of belonging that provides shelter from 'urban hazards' like: "the commercial pressures of the fashion industry and peer group pressures to engage with drugs, underage sex, bullying, violent crime and bad language" (Valentine 1997: 140). Research has shown that this perception is - at least partly - shared by children and young people (see Valentine 1997; Glendinning et al. 2003; Auclair & Vanoni 2004). Jones (1997: 174), however, has critically pointed out that such idyllic literary descriptions of the country child mainly represent "adult constructions of childhood, and therefore need to be treated with caution in respect of assuming that they have truly entered children's worlds".

Recent studies have opened a discrepancy between rural myth and reality, demonstrating that many rural dwellers experience life very differently from the way in which the rural idyll portrays it (Little 1986, 1994; Bell & Valentine 1995; Little & Austin 1996; Valentine 1997; Matthews et al. 2000; Nairn et al. 2003; Yarwood & Gardner 2000; Giddings & Yarwood 2005). The results of these studies indicate that young people's perception of their rural environment is much more complex than it is portrayed in the rural idyll and that it is affected by dimensions such as age (see for example Glendinning et al.

2003; Giddings & Yarwood 2005), ethnicity (Panelli 2002; Panelli et al. 2002; Pilkington & Johnson 2003; Shucksmith 2004) and gender (Little 1986, 1994; Bell and Valentine 1995; Little 1997, 2002a, 2002b; Little and Leyshon 2003, Little and Panelli 2003). Referring to the British countryside Matthews and his colleagues (2000) have even stated that their analysis of young people's rural lives points towards a "geography of exclusion and disenfranchisement" (ibid: 151) that is contradictory to the image of the rural idyll (see also Elsely 2004). These findings highlight the need to listen to the experiences and perceptions of young people to uncover forms of structural exclusion and disadvantage.

In addition, as early as 1988, Colin Ward already pointed out that modernisation had started to change people's lives in the countryside drastically. Identifying both negative and positive sides of this development, Ward argued that mass communication technologies are producing 'global villagers' (Ward 1988) as people in the countryside have increasing access to 'other worlds' and lifestyles. This corresponds with a 'new optimism' (see Laegran 2002) for rural areas as it is assumed that increasing development and access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) may lessen regional differences. While Ward was mainly referring to the influence of TV this optimism for rural areas has grown more recently in connection with access to and use of the internet which is seen as a cultural medium to the wider world (Holloway & Valentine 2000; Laegran 2002). Although academics have paid little attention to how people living in rural areas use these communication technologies it is assumed that urban and rural lives have become more similar (Laegran 2002).

While these considerations have to be taken into account it is further important to acknowledge that young people's perception of growing up rural

might differ from the British rural idyll in other rural, European contexts. Laegran (2002), for example, has pointed out that the construction of the rural as 'dull' (ibid: 158) has to be seen as equally influential as the already introduced construction of the rural idyll, at least within the Scandinavian context. For young people, these contradictory images are seen to create a tension between identification with the local community on the one hand and the desire to reach out for education and to get to know 'the world' on the other. That this may also apply in West Germany is notable from the editorial of a West German Journal which is written for rural German youth (Bund der deutschen Landjugend Spezial 2003⁴). It highlights the increasing importance and potential of rural traditions within an increasingly changing world and the advantaged position of rural youth that still grow up in a traditional atmosphere of the rural community which may give stability to their lives. If young people manage to find a balance between rural tradition and global trends, so the argument goes, they can profit from their rural background. It thus corresponds with the main values of the rural idyll, emphasising the positive aspects of growing up in a more traditionally oriented close knit community which seems to become even more important in the increasingly changing present-day world.

However, with regard to East Germany it needs to be considered that differences between rural and urban areas in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) were not as distinct as in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). In fact, the idea of overcoming the differences between rural and urban regions was part of the political ideology of state socialism as it was perceived as a

⁴ Original quotation: „Nichts ändert sich so schnell wie die Trends und nichts brauchen wir mehr als gewisse Traditionen. Die Landjugend bietet eine tolle Chance beide Bereiche im Gleichgewicht zu halten. Hier werden Traditionen gepflegt und Trends entwickelt" (Bund der deutschen Landjugend 2003: 2/3)

means of emancipation from capitalistic societies (see Beetz 2004). It can therefore be assumed that the image of the 'rural' within the socialist context of the GDR did not necessarily correspond with the West German, Scandinavian or British image as it might not have been conceptualised in such a strong dichotomous way. Since reunification socio-economic differences between rural and urban areas have become increasingly notable (van Hoven 2001, 2002; Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung 2005). It means that the image of the rural as the ideal place to grow up might thus contradict young people's experiences and perceptions of present-day life in rural East Germany. It can further be expected that images of the rural have been changing dramatically within the last 15 years due to the transformation process so that different, possibly contradictory constructions of the rural might coexist. That images of the rural are subject to dramatic changes in post-socialist regions was also found with regard to other post-socialist countries (see Juska 2007).

This could become important particularly when looking at young people's perception of the rural and their experiences of socio-spatial inclusion and/or exclusion. But as a result of a missing academic debate on young people's perception of their local environment and the probably altered concept of rurality more generally within the East German context, this can not be developed any further at this point. It is important to analyse participants' constructions of rurality to get a deeper understanding of young people's perception of the advantages and disadvantages of growing up in rural East Germany. Further it will be analysed how participants define 'rural' and if they perceive themselves as 'rural' young people. Although more geographical work is now focusing on children's experiences of rural life, McCormack (2002: 194) has critically highlighted that young people's understanding of their rural environment might

“mess up adult/academic understandings of rurality” (see also Nairn et al. 2003). A focus on the spatial identity of young people and their construction of the rural may uncover how they experience and perceive socio-spatial disadvantages.

In the context of East German youth this self positioning with regard to the rural or urban and with regard to the region and the East-West-German discourse may play an important role for their socio-spatial identity formation. Academic researchers have repeatedly noted the development of an ‘East German identity’, sustained by the feeling of being treated as ‘second class citizens’ (Pollack 1997; Meulemann 1998; Pollack & Pickel 1998; Mühlberg 2001, 2002). It has to be questioned how young people position themselves in this East-West-German discourse. As the participants of this research project were born between 1988 and 1991 they have not experienced living in the GDR themselves and can hardly have any memories of the time before the reunification. That means, while their parents were socialised in the GDR, the young themselves grew up in a unified Germany. How do they relate to the term ‘East Germany’? Do they feel ‘East German’? And what image do they construct about East Germany? Asking these questions is important, as they show how different scales intersect with understandings of the rural. Processes of socio-spatial exclusion are further affected by categories like gender, age and social class. While these categories overlap with each other in complex ways I want to point out that they are strongly connected with the construction of the ‘rural’ and are therefore bound together and examined through the meaning of ‘rural life’.

3.1.2 Negotiation of rural work

Panelli (2002) has highlighted that young people's access to vocational training and job opportunities plays an important role with regard to the structural advantages/disadvantages young people are growing up in. In addition, she has pointed out that socio-cultural understandings of gender relations, for example, as well as young people's interests, aims and abilities affect the way rural work is negotiated. Poor access to training facilities and job opportunities in rural East Germany has been identified as one of the major problem young people have to face (see Chapter 1 and 2) having led to high rates of out-migration. The following sections will thus discuss research which has focused on the socio-economic disadvantages of growing up rural. In addition, the issue of out-migration will be introduced. Following more recent research findings it will be argued that young people's motives to leave their place of residence can not only be explained by economic factors but are often the outcome of the way they are integrated in their rural community and feelings of well-being.

3.1.2.1 Economic disadvantages of rural residency

Disadvantages, social exclusion and poverty were for a long time perceived as urban issues and academics have only recently focused on the different levels of social exclusion which rural young people have to face to understand and hopefully challenge these processes which create a wide range of (rural) disadvantages (see Yarwood & Gardner 2000; Woods 2005, 2007). These rural disadvantages are often referred to as forms of social exclusion from the economy and labour market (Vanderbeck & Dunkley 2004) or, in a

broader sense as “a wide set of difficulties preventing people from participating fully in society, including poverty but also, for example, limiting factors in one's life situation (such as lack of skills), unequal levels of health and well-being associated with economic disadvantage, and discrimination” (Commission for Rural Communities 2005: 2). This refers to the assumption of existing spatial inequalities between the rural and the urban and accordingly contradicts the claim discussed earlier that place has lost much of its significance (see Giddens 1991).

Particularly with reference to the socio-economic situation in the countryside contemporary research suggests that life in rural areas is problematic for young people (Furlong & Cartmel 1997; Francis 1999; Glendinning et al. 2003). In this context a number of issues have been highlighted that may affect young people who are living in the countryside negatively (see also Böhnisch & Winter 1990; Francis 1999; Baur & Burrmann 2000; Auclair & Vanoni 2004):

- poor choice of facilities and services for young people;
- long distances to and limited choice of schools due to increasing closure of schools as a result of the increasing number of young people living in the countryside;
- limited public transport;
- limited job prospects and high rates of youth unemployment;
- as well as the danger of social isolations as the number of young people may be limited in smaller communities;
- ageing population;
- social pressure;
- high costs of housing or limited housing available.

It will have to be questioned if participants in rural East Germany refer to similar dimensions of rural disadvantages and which dimensions they might relate to the post-socialist transformation process.

Further it has to be analysed, what implication the experience and perception of such disadvantages has on participants' everyday lives. Following Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's individualization theory (2002), out-migration is the outcome of a greater awareness of personal opportunities at alternative locations (see also Elder et al. 1996). That means that out-migration can be interpreted as young people's response to the experiences of spatial socio-economical disadvantage in their residential areas. This corresponds with Beck's (2002) critique that structural inequalities like the fear to become, or the experience of being unemployed are increasingly perceived as personal incompetence which requires an individual response, in this case: out-migration.

In addition, Bauman (1992) has pointed out that flexibility and mobility have not only become an important part of people's everyday lives but are furthermore generally valued as important competencies to live a successful life as the "progress in life is measured and marked by moving houses and offices" (Bauman 1992: 695). This means that high flexibility and the will and ability to live a mobile life are becoming normative expectations (young) people have to meet. Young people's migration plans thus represent individual decisions as well as the 'natural' development of young people's transition from dependent childhood to independent adulthood (Jones 1999; Kaufmann 2002). However, Bauman (1999: 40) has also highlighted that young people's migration experiences vary immensely as "[t]hose 'high up' travel through life to their hearts' desire and pick and choose their destinations by the joys they offer.

Those 'low down' are thrown out from the site they would rather stay in, and if they do not move, it is the site that is pulled from under their feet".

I want to analyse young people's migration plans and motives. Further I want to look at the spatial dimension of their migration plans: where do young people want to migrate to, which spaces do they identify as being connected with offering 'additional options' Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) refer to? Particularly with regard to young people growing up in a former socialist country these questions become important as they help to understand how young people are affected by transformation processes and in how far socio-economic disadvantages are perceived as spatial disadvantages. This might help to understand why some might be 'higher up' than others as Bauman (1999) discusses and why some might profit more from new chances than others (see Chapter 2).

3.1.2.1 Out-migration of rural youth

Although local conditions may vary, youth unemployment rates have generally increased within Europe and North America since the late 1980s due to economic restructuring and institutional changes which transformed the labour markets (Elder et al. 1996; Elder & Meier 1997; Cartmel & Furlong 2000; Isengard 2003; Valentine 2003). This causes additional uncertainties for young people in terms of the transition from school to work (Griffin 2001). Young people generally remain longer in the educational system to avoid unemployment and invest in education (Isengard 2003). At the same time, however, the dependency of people's lives on inclusion in the labour market is increasing (Beck 1992).

However, rural young people have been described as even more disadvantaged than their urban counterparts due to the limited job opportunities and high unemployment rates they are facing which have resulted in high out-migration rates of particularly young people from rural environments. This out-migration has been identified as one of the central problems rural areas are facing within industrialized western countries (Furlong & Cartmel 1997; Kieselbach et al. 2002; Isengard 2003; Jentsch 2004) which might affect not only future migration concerns but also young people's daily lives quite heavily as it can cause feeling of additional risk and uncertainty.

Empirical research on young people's migration pattern has shown that particularly better skilled young people aim to leave the countryside to find appropriate employment (Elder et al. 1996; Elder & Meier 1997; Stockdale et al. 2000; Stockdale 2002, 2004). This corresponds with migration patterns which can be observed within the East German context. Here, the out-migration of skilled young people in particular has been described as an immediate danger, as it strengthens the divide between West Germany and East Germany (Werz 2001) and reinforces the image of East German youth as 'losers' of reunification (see also Brake & Büchner 1996; Kollmorgen 2003). It is thus assumed that differences between the two German parts are still increasing.

However, academics within the field of migration studies have recently criticised that this focus on economic disadvantage and thus on the experience of economic exclusion does not sufficiently explain young people's migration pattern (Dahlstroem 1996; Jones 1999; Ní Laoire 2000; Glendinning et al. 2003; Wiborg 2004a, 2004b; O'Connor 2005). This critique also applies with regard to rural young people's migration patterns in the East German context which show differences to migration patterns of West German youths (see Dienel & Gerloff

2003). This calls for a broader understanding of social exclusion that is not only reduced to experiences of economic disadvantages but includes “the inability to participate effectively in economic, social, political and cultural life, and, in some characterisations, alienation and distance from the mainstream society” (Duffy 1995: 5).

Therefore more research needs to be done which explores the importance of the rural community for young people’s socio-spatial identity construction and its effects on young people’s out-migration. Following Giddens’ (1991) concept of human agency Ní Laoire (2000: 235) argues that “the process of transition in youth cannot be understood without taking into account all aspects of the personal and environmental context in which it takes place, including the relevant dimensions of power and inequality that help to shape it”. Although not directly referring to Massey’s conceptualization of place, Ní Laoire comes to a very similar conclusion to call for a more contextual analysis which includes the different power-relations young people are engaged with.

Similar to this Jones (1999) has highlighted the importance of understanding the relationship between agency and structure to explain migration behaviour as “migrating and staying on are not simple responses to local disadvantage” (Jones 1999: 20). In reconstructing the socio-spatial identity of young people from the Scottish Borders Jones (ibid.) describes out-migration as a result of the combination of structural constraints and individual motivations. The latter can be influenced by a sense of belonging which is not only a matter of individual choice, but also of community acceptance. Jones (1999) provides evidence of the, as she calls it, still under-recognized factor of socio-spatial youth identities and the role of communities within it. This position is supported by other empirical findings which indicate that young people who

are involved in their communities exhibit higher levels of community attachment and are thus more likely to stay (see Elder et al. 1996; Stockdale 2002; Glendinning et al. 2003).

One dimension that might play an important role with regard to young people's sense of belonging might be the dimension of gender. It has been argued that rural lifestyles sustain patriarchal gender relations (see Little & Austin 1996; Hughes 1997). This does not mean that traditional gender relations identifying women's central role as mothers and main carers are exclusive to rural communities as they can be found at different levels within the urban context as well. Nonetheless, Little (2002a: 86) has argued that they are more dominant in rural areas as "the strength of traditional ideas concerning gender roles in relation to parenting and family life and the lack of (overt) contestation of these roles do seem to be clear features of contemporary rural life in developed countries". This leads to a much stronger reproduction of hegemonic gender relations than in urban areas which results in more rigid forms of social exclusion and marginalization. Empirical studies have, for example, shown that girls have fewer opportunities than boys for career advancement in rural communities (Elder et al. 1996). And although they tend to be more family-centred than their male counterparts they are also more likely to migrate due to these disadvantages (Dahlstroem 1996; Elder et al. 1996).

It further demonstrates how strongly the conception of the 'rural' is connected with specific expectations about the gendered identities of young people. Therefore it is necessary to reconstruct and understand the different perceptions people have about their rural environment and the meanings they give to places as it includes normative expectations about what it means to be a countryside boy or girl, man or woman. This means that categories like gender

as well as age and social class need to be understood in relation to construction of the rural.

However, only little attention has been given to the dimension of gender in young people's rural lives in the context of former socialist countries, although academics have consistently highlighted the 'persistence' ('Beharrungsvermögen') of gender roles developed in the GDR (see Schenk 1995, 2000). Empirical evidence suggests that socialist gender roles continue to be valued by East Germans, which is reflected for example in the high orientation for full-time employment of East German women which does not correspond with the West German gender specific pattern (see Schneider 1994; Trappe 1995; Dietzsch & Dölling 1996; Meyer & Schulze 1998; Dölling 2000; Schenk 2000; Dölling 2001; Trappe & Rosenfeld 2001; van Hoven 2001, 2002; Hörschelmann & van Hoven 2003; Schäfer 2003, 2005a).

The findings demonstrate the possibility of continuities from the GDR and highlight the necessity to understand and analyse East German lives in the context of experiences made in the GDR, as cultural practices, values and norms might still affect the present day lives (see also Smith 1998). However, new forms or structures have also been developed as a consequence of post-socialist transformation process. Empirical research has shown that this also includes processes of re-traditionalisation of gender differences with regard to the division of work in the East German context (see Dölling 2000; Klenner 2002; Schäfer 2005a) as well as with regard to other post-socialist countries (see Tomanovic & Ignjatovic 2006). If re-traditionalisation processes are experienced by young people this might increase their intention to leave the rural environment, particularly for female young people. It thus will be interesting to elaborate if participants that grow up in rural East Germany are referring to a

traditional understanding of gender roles and how it affects their experiences of inclusion and exclusion and thus their everyday lives.

It will thus be important to analyse how young people in rural East Germany perceive and are perceived within their rural community as this might affect their migration plans. Understanding how young people are positioned within the community and which experiences of exclusion and inclusion they refer to will give a deeper insight into their perceptions and feelings of belonging. It will further help to uncover the multiple power-relations that characterise their everyday lives. This will contribute to a more contextualised understanding of young people's everyday lives and corresponds with Massey's (1993) conception of 'place' that refers to social relations and understanding.

To analyse young people's (dynamic and) multiple positions within 'places' the following sections will focus on recently emerging literature that has highlighted the different forms of exclusion young people experience within their rural communities. This overview and discussion of the main topics academics have addressed so far will be used to concretise the research questions of this project and to open up new directions of research that this thesis aims to contribute to.

3.1.3 Negotiation of rural social relations and political arenas

Recent literature on young people's lives in rural communities has started to focus on socio-spatial aspects of rural residency following the understanding that young people's feelings about life in rural communities and their attachment to place matters for their emotional well-being, their socio-spatial identity construction and the development of future life plans (see Hughes 1997; Glendinning et al. 2003; Nairn et al. 2003; Wiborg 2004;

Bjarnason & Thorlindsson 2006; Jack 2006). As this more contextual work is in its early stages, the relationship and degrees of young people's socio-spatial attachment to their local communities still needs to be researched in more depth as it does not only give a deeper insight into young people's motives of out-migration but furthermore helps to understand dynamics of structural socio-spatial inclusion and exclusion of young people more generally which will affect their socio-spatial identity construction.

Acknowledging the importance of personal and emotional bindings Panelli (2002) has identified the negotiation of young people's social relations and political arenas as further key dimensions that characterises their everyday life experiences. These dimensions highlight the importance of young people's experiences with regard to their families, peers and community members and their institutional inclusion in the community.

In recent years geographers have highlighted that young people experience different forms of exclusion from adult dominated public spaces (Valentine 1997; Matthews et al. 2000; Aitken 2001; Elsley 2004; Gallagher 2004). Within this geographical literature two main arguments can be identified which try to explain the causes of the spatial exclusion of young people from public spaces. They refer a) to an increasing parental anxiety of children's safety in public spaces which connects to the image of the 'innocent' child (see Valentine 1996, Jones 1997; Valentine 1997; Valentine & McKendrick 1997; Aitken 2001; Yarwood & Gardener 2004) and b) to the popularised perception of young people as a 'threat' to (rural) communities (see Sibley 1995; Valentine 1996, 1997; Valentine & McKendrick 1997; Matthews, Limb & Percy-Smith 1998; Jones 1999; Yarwood & Gardner 2000; Vanderbeck & Johnson 2000; Laegran 2002).

Experiences of spatial exclusion and marginalization are not only characteristic for rural youth in particular but for young people's lives more generally (see Sibley 1995). With regard to formal processes of including young people in political decision making research on urban youth has shown that attempts of including young people have to be seen as highly limited and problematic because participation is still conceived to be an 'adult activity' (Matthews, Limb & Taylor 1999 see also Matthews & Limb 1997; Matthews 2001; Cunningham et al. 2003). The research findings thus indicate that young people experience structural forms of exclusion although it is increasingly argued that children and young people are capable of, for example, designing and changing their built environment (Gallagher 2004).

It should be highlighted, however, that rural young people are even more affected by these forms of exclusion than their urban counterparts as they are more likely to face a lack of institutional leisure facilities and are more dependent on public places to meet up with their peers than urban young people (Matthews, Limb & Percy-Smith 1998; Jones 1999).

Considering that services for young people are particularly limited in rural East Germany it becomes important to understand which controlling mechanisms young people refer to that might limit and thus restrict their use of (local) spaces and the development of spatial attachment. In this context empirical research has highlighted that gender has an impact on young people's use of space. I want to refer to this dimension in the following section.

3.1.4 Negotiation of rural space

The dimension of negotiating rural spaces plays an important role with regard to young people's sense of belonging and spatial attachment. Previous

research has highlighted the impact of gender on young people's use and negotiation of rural space. In 1984, Massey and Allen had already argued that place matters as it influences and is influenced by human activity. In highlighting especially the relation between specific gender-relations and place they argued that gender norms are associated with certain places and can restrict women's use of space in multiple ways.

In line with this, Tucker and Matthews' (2001) study in rural Northamptonshire further showed that girls are more restricted from using outdoor spaces than boys due to their age and gender. In addition, girls seem to emphasise social aspects of community more than boys, describing it as supportive, caring and inclusive while at the same time highlighting its intrusiveness and controlling dimension. Glendinning et al. (2003) and Dahlstroem (1996) found that girls expressed more often than boys the feeling of not fitting into the rural community as well as the limited future prospects for them.

These findings indicate that gender has to be seen as an important category which needs to be included in the analysis of young people's daily lives as it affects gendered processes of socio-spatial inclusion and exclusion for example, in relation to the use of public space and the experience of social control. Such gendered differences highlight, according to Glendinning et al. (2003) the importance of listening to the diversity of young people's live experiences and situations in rural areas. With regard to young people in rural East Germany it will be important to analyse how participants experience gender specific roles. As already discussed it will be particularly interesting to analyse in how far these young people's experiences and perceptions reflect on

the persistence of socialist gender roles or if they strengthen the hypothesis of a re-traditionalisation of gender roles in post-socialist Germany.

To understand how young people perceive and make use of rural spaces it is necessary to look at forms of exclusion and inclusion and to understand the multiple ways in which rural space is negotiated amongst members of the rural community. Public spaces are highly limited for young people in rural areas so they might face more difficulties establishing their own meeting-points and to find spaces that match their lifestyles.

However, understanding young people as social agents means to acknowledge the ways in which they negotiate access and the use of places and spaces. In the following I want to focus on one aspect of the negotiation of space which has mostly been neglected in previous research: the negotiation of spaces amongst young people. I will show that power relations amongst participants had a major impact on their spatial perception and use and discuss the research findings from the exceptional work which has addressed the power-relations amongst young people.

3.1.4.1 Negotiating space amongst young people

Besides being marginalised and excluded from public spaces by perceptions of public spaces as 'adult spaces', geographers have recently highlighted that young people's use of space is influenced by power-hierarchies among themselves (Panelli 2002). Matthews, Limb and Percy-Smith (1998) discovered in their study of young people's use of space that a fear of assault and attack by or fights with other youth have strong influence on young people's use of space as it affects their feeling of safety and freedom (see also Matthews et al. 2000). In contrast to the two dimensions discussed above this dimension

is putting young people into focus to understand their daily lives in uncovering power-relations *among* them. These power relations have been neglected in the research of young people's spatial behaviour as the focus of research is all too often on adult perceptions of the young highlighting the unequal power relation between adults and children/youth. However, such a one-sided construction of young people as powerless and marginalized runs the risk of overlooking the diversity of young people's lives and geographies (see also Schäfer & Yarwood 2008).

Holloway and Valentine (2000) have more generally identified a lack of research on children's agency in terms of resisting not only adult control but also avoiding domination by other children through strategic alliances with adults. They highlight the need for more research on the complex power relations which characterise young people's use of space and the complex ways in which they are negotiated. This thesis aims to address this lack of research in not only foregrounding young people's perceptions but also in analysing the multiple forms of negotiations that characterise their everyday lives and highlight young people's agency.

3.2 Broadening the images of the rural as a 'space of marginalization' and of 'marginalised rural youth'

Following the post-modern call to give marginalised others a voice and to analyse the power relations which cause neglect and exclusion, the empirical results discussed above have uncovered multiple processes of constraint that affect young people's lives in the countryside. They indicate that young people's use of public space is limited by hegemonic constructions of space as an adult domain which seems to be threatened by the 'crisis of childhood' (Aitken 2001).

This has resulted not only in an increasing control of children's use of public place but furthermore in the promotion of indoor activities for young people. Children's free play and independent environmental exploration is constrained while an increasing use of child care and private play schemes can be observed (Aitken 1994; Valentine 1997). However, these more organised (indoor) activities are very often connected with extra costs and access to public and private forms of transport. That means that low-income families are disadvantaged in offering a 'safe play space' which therefore becomes a 'class privilege' (Katz 1993; Aitken 1994; Valentine 1997; Katz 2004). It shows the political dimension of socio-spatial structures of exclusion children and young people have to face.

This becomes all the more important in the context of young people's life conditions in second modernity as special skills are needed not only to cope with new risks and uncertainties but also to benefit from new choices and chances to construct one's own biography. However, children who do not have the chance to take part in institutional activities are lacking, according to Valentine and McKendrick (1997), the enhanced 'cultural capital' which a participation in these activities could offer and which is mainly accessible to middle class children (see Valentine & McKendrick 1997; Hörschelmann & Schäfer 2005, 2007). These findings indicate that the possibilities to benefit from the choices and options which are connected with second modernity might be unevenly distributed among young people (Shucksmith 2004).

Children's and young people's marginalization in an adult-centred society (see also Aitken 2001; Punch 2002) needs to be taken more seriously as it indicates the persistence and reconstruction of more general forms of young people's social exclusion. With regard to rural young people this has been

identified as an even greater risk as the conceptualization of the 'rural' as an ideal place to grow up dominates (at least) the British discourse of rural childhood which distracts from a critical perspective on the conditions of young rural lives (see Matthews et al. 2000).

In accordance with Panelli (2002; see also Opitz-Karig 2003) I want to argue, however, that the negative image of the rural in general and of rural residency for young people in particular has to be challenged as rural spaces are not only spaces of marginalization but also spaces of possibilities "where landscapes of youth can be read as terrains of creativity, conflict and change, flexing over the broader topography of political-economic processes and socio-cultural systems" (Panelli 2002: 121). This does not mean that socio-spatial or economic disadvantages of rural residency do not need to be investigated in more detail as they are of high political relevance to address young people's rights. Nor does it call for a strengthening of the 'rural idyll'. It rather refers to the aim of elaborating a more complex and heterogeneous understanding of rural space and of young people's rural lives. Nairn et al. (2003: 37) have argued similarly that "[u]nderstanding young people's experiences of public (and private) space as contradictory, ambiguous, at times inclusive and exclusive, provides a more complex and nuanced representation of young people and of space as heterogeneous. Just as there is no unitary representation of the 'public', 'urban' or 'rural' child, there is no unitary representation of public space".

As important as it is to highlight different levels of socio-spatial and economic exclusion there is a danger of conceptualising young people as a homogenous, powerless group that is unable to respond to, escape or challenge these forms of exclusion (James et al. 1998). Such a construction of

youth/childhood, however, does not allow space for young people's multiple experiences and life situations as "we risk drawing on some standard model of what 'childhood' is which may be quite unfounded in the specific local circumstances" (James et al. 1998: 140). While still more research needs to be done to uncover structural inequalities, I agree with James et al.'s (1998) warning that research, which focuses only on the structural position of young people as disadvantaged runs the risk of overlooking their agency. It is insufficient to describe the restricting contexts young people are living in as it does not take into account how processes of exclusion are experienced differently and may affect young people's lives in very different ways.

I want to argue that only if we combine Beck's and Giddens' perspective on the structuring conditions of second modernity with their – although oversimplified – emphasis on agency which James and her colleagues (1998) have called for will it be possible to understand "the many differences between young people that leave some youth more vulnerable to marginalization while others have relatively positive social experiences" (Panelli et al. 2002:124).

Although James et al. (1998) have identified the need for more research within the new social study of childhood that combines structure and agency, this gap has been addressed by only a small number of academics that report on young people's experiences of inclusion or their strategies to resist and challenge exclusion (see exceptional work of Matthews, Limb, & Percy-Smith 1998; Valentine 1998; Holloway & Valentine 2000; Valentine 2000; Panelli et al. 2002; Allen 2003; Nairn et al. 2003; Vanderbeck & Dunkley 2004). The empirical findings of the latter are calling previous research that has focused on young people as 'marginalized others' whose experiences are distinguished by exclusion (see Philo 1992; Sibley 1995; Matthews et al. 2000) into question as it

uncovers young people's active role and potential in creating their own cultural and social practices and in constructing their own understandings of place. Nairn et al. (2003) have shown, for example, that young people rarely experience either processes of exclusion or inclusion but that a mixture of both characterizes their daily lives in rural as well as in urban contexts. These findings tie in with the call in migration studies to analyse young people's socio-spatial embeddedness in the rural environment contradicting Beck's (2002) assumption that familial bindings as well as the importance of place decrease in second modernity (see also Giddens 1990). It is therefore necessary to elaborate complex processes of inclusion and exclusion, of challenge and resistance that characterise young people's rural lives.

In addition to the work on actual forms of inclusion within the context of the rural community, academics have analysed different forms of resistance that indicate young people's agency. This finds its expression for example in strategies through which young people challenge the limited use of space. Examples of this are given by various authors showing, for example, that girls are making use of spaces which are perceived as 'dangerous' through walking with another person (Nairn et al. 2003), or by meeting other young people in public places to go skateboarding at peak times although/ or because it is officially not permitted referring to forms of resistance (Panelli et al. 2002). Matthews et al. (1998) have further shown that young people create their own 'microgeographies' within their local environment through, for example, the development of alternative patterns of land use. And even though young people's negotiation of space is often related to a (restricting) frame which is set by adults (see Matthews, Limb & Percy-Smith 1998) these findings still highlight

young people's agency and the strategies they develop to resist or challenge experienced disadvantages (see also Holloway and Valentine 2000).

Considering that research on people's lives in post-socialist countries has highlighted that the transformation process cannot simply be understood as a one-way process to capitalism it is important to research young people's agency to understand their everyday life experiences more fully. This thesis aims to address this in analysing the different strategies young people develop to resist, cope with or even overcome experienced disadvantages. Such strategies will give a deeper insight into young people's perceptions of personal opportunities and limitations. They further reflect on differences amongst young people with regard to the support they get, their skills and competencies which might cause inequalities amongst them. Highlighting, how young people perceive and experience disadvantages and how they aim to overcome them is thus seen as a valuable way of getting an insight into the heterogeneity of their lives and might help to understand why some young people seem to benefit from new opportunities more than others.

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced Panelli's (2002) model of negotiations as a way to capture the complex power relations that characterise young people's lives in rural regions. It provides a framework to empirically analyse the multiple power-geometries (Massey 1993. 2005) which give a deeper insight into the meaning of space in second modernity. Looking at the different dimensions of negotiations might further help to understand why some young people suffer or benefit more from new opportunities and risks than others. Here, the term

'negotiation' Panelli (2002) becomes particularly important as it reflects on and highlights the importance of the relationship between structure and agency.

Following Panelli's description of different spheres of rural life it could be shown that previous research has addressed issues such as the meaning of the construction of the 'rural' and how it affects our understanding of what it means to be a 'countryside girl' or 'boy' (Valentine 1996). However, at the same time it became apparent that the 'rural' in post-socialist context might have a different meaning than, for example, in the British context. Previous research, however, has often neglected to address these contextual differences. This is particularly true with regard to the probable changes of the meaning of rurality in post-socialist regions. To understand young people's live experiences rural East Germany and thus analyse their negotiation of 'rural knowledge' (Panelli 2002) it is thus essential to analyse how they construct 'rural', if they perceive themselves as 'rural youth' and what it means to them.

With regard to the negotiation of rural work it could further be shown that socio-economic disadvantages and consequences such as high outmigration rates of young people in particular represent a common characteristic of rural regions in Europe. It will thus be important to analyse how participants understand and negotiate their education and (future) job opportunities in the region. Recent research on young people's mobility have increasingly highlighted, however, that economic exclusion does not sufficiently explain young people's migration pattern and thus calls for a broader understanding of social exclusion. It has thus been argued that it is also important to look at young people's emotional well-being and spatial attachment indicating that more contextualised analysis is needed to understand the complex motives to leave or stay in the region. This highlights the need to get an insight into the

complex power-relations that characterise young people's everyday lives which might have an important impact on young people's feelings of belonging.

In the context of outmigration the persistence of strong hegemonic gender relations in rural areas have been identified as one aspect that influences young people's migration plans. With regard to young people's lives in rural East Germany it could be highlighted that research on gender relation in post-socialist Germany refers to two trends: firstly to the persistence of socialist gender roles and secondly to possible re-traditionalism of gender relations. While previous research on East-West German gender relations has focused on those who grew up (at least partly) in the socialist GDR this thesis includes those who grew up at the time of reunification. It will thus be interesting to analyse how they perceive and experience gender differences and how it impacts on their everyday lives.

With regard to the third and fourth of Panelli's (2002) dimension of social relations and political arenas it can be said that previous research has increasingly highlighted the importance of spatial attachment and emotional well-being. Research focusing on the inclusion of young people in communities as well as in formal decision making processes indicates, however, that young people's voices often remain unheard. As this can have a strong impact on, for example, young people's migration intentions this is an area I will look at in the analysis by focusing on participants perceptions of their position within their local community and their experiences of inclusion and exclusion.

Finally, it could be shown that previous research has highlighted that the negotiation of rural spaces (Panelli 2002) is affected by dimensions such as gender and age. With regard to the post-socialist contexts participants are growing up in it will be important to analyse how they describe and experience

the impact of gender on their everyday lives. In addition I have argued that is particularly important to not only focus on power-relations amongst adult community members and young people but also to acknowledge power-relations amongst the latter. Such relations may have a strong impact on how young people experience and make use of everyday spaces.

I have further argued that focusing solely on the image of rural 'marginalized' young people that are living in an adult-centred world where 'participation' is still perceived as an adult-activity (Matthews, Limb & Taylor 1999) neglects to acknowledge young people's agency and does not cover the complexity of their everyday lives. In accordance with Panelli (2002) and Nairn and her colleagues (2003) I have rather highlighted that it is necessary to elaborate forms of exclusion *as well as* inclusion, participation, resistance and challenge that refer to young people's life experiences more accurately. To further challenge the image of the rural as either the ideal place for young people to grow up in or as a place of exclusion and marginalisation as well as the understanding of rural East German youth as loser of reunification the analysis will focus on young people's experiences and perceptions of their living conditions, their understanding of rural and the way they describe their position within their rural community. In addition, I will analyse the multiple strategies which young people develop to cope with and challenge experienced disadvantages. This focus on young people's understanding, forms of negotiation and strategies acknowledges young people as social agents in their own right.

However, wider power-relations need to be considered as well that might affect young people's lives which includes, for example, the impact of the post-socialist transformation process as well as young people's understanding of

probably still existing East-West German differences. Before addressing these issues in the three analysis chapters, the following chapter discusses the methodological and ethical considerations of giving young people a voice. It gives an insight into the research design, sample and research methods.

CHAPTER 4

Methodology

4. Introduction

In this chapter I discuss how the theoretical and conceptual understandings introduced in Chapter 2 and 3 have informed my research approach and how they were translated into a methodological strategy to gain a better understanding of young people's geographies within the context of rural East Germany. Key concerns were that the socio-economic periphery of rural young people has a major impact on their experiences of social, cultural and economic forms of exclusion and inclusion and to examine what impact post-socialist transformation processes have on young people's everyday lives. The general assumptions were that, firstly, young people are social agents and thus cultural producers on their own right. Secondly, young people's daily life is characterised by power-relations and social understandings that are causing multiple forms of inclusion and exclusion which have a major impact on young people's socio-spatial identity construction. Thirdly, differences between young people leave some of them vulnerable to marginalization while others profit more from the new chances and choices of second modernity (see Bynner et al. 1997; Furlong & Cartmel 1997; Beck 2000; Panelli et al. 2002; Isengard 2003; Shucksmith 2004). As argued in Chapter 2 and 3 it is thus necessary to develop research approaches which help to uncover these multiple power-relations and thus to analyse the heterogeneity of young people's geographies.

To acknowledge young people as social agents and thus as experts of their own lives, this thesis focuses on young people's everyday experiences, perceptions and understandings. This was addressed methodologically through facilitating a participatory research approach which allowed young people to get involved in the research process from a very early stage, and gave them a say about the research design, content and outcomes. This chapter reflects on the ethical and methodological challenges of developing such participatory research design and thus addresses the fourth aim of the thesis in particular. The chapter is divided into four main sections. First, it will be discussed how participation can be facilitated through and in a research project (see 4.1). Section 4.2 then introduces the research design, the site of study and the rationale for the sampling while section 4.3 explains the rationale for each method in greater detail which contains for example topic guidelines used in the focus groups and so on. Finally, it will be discussed which role the participants played with regard to the dissemination and analysis of the research data (see 4.4).

4.1 Participatory research and its meaning for researching young people's lives

The growing awareness of children's rights and their marginalized position in society has initiated a complex debate on the methodological and theoretical considerations of researching young people. This includes critical reflections on the general purpose of research and its political implications as well as debates on *how* to do research not only *on* but *with* and *for* young people. The centre of this debate forms the power-imbalance of the child-adult-relationship which critical and feminist geographers as well as children's geographers have identified as a main aspect of consideration as it a) leads to

structural forms of exclusion and marginalization of young people (see Chapter 3) and b) has major implications for the research process itself as research is mainly developed, conducted and analysed by adults. It is argued that young people's voices are thus all too often represented indirectly and through the eyes of adults although they have their own way of perceiving and experiencing space. In this context, children's geographers increasingly refer to the idea of participation as a tool to give young people a voice. This corresponds strongly with the feminist idea of 'empowerment' as power and empowerment form central concepts of participatory research (PR). It also aims to minimize the distance between the researchers and the researched while critically reflecting on who owns and benefits from the research (see Pain 2004).

Children's participation is generally defined as "an informed and willing involvement of all children, including the most marginalised and those of different ages and abilities, in any matter concerning them either directly or indirectly" (Save the Children 2005: 4). Seeing participation as a 'basic right of individuals' (Barry 1996), which has been put on the political agenda through the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), participatory research is increasingly described as an important tool to give marginalized others a voice. Matthews and Limb (1999) have in this context argued that research on young people's lives should "not just [be] reported for its own sake, but should lead to outcomes which encourage empowerment, participation and self-determination consistent with levels of competence" (ibid: 61). This has led to the use of a wide range of innovative approaches that engage young people more actively in the research process. It includes particularly the use of visually oriented and task-centred methods such as drawings and mental maps (Matthews 1984a, 1984b; Blades et al. 1998; Harden et al. 2000; Young & Barrett 2001a, 2001b,

Punch 2002a), photo- or video projects (Young & Barrett 2001a, 2001b; Leyshon 2002; Panelli et al. 2002; Punch 2002b; Ali 2003; McIntyre 2003; Nairn et al. 2003; Darbyshire et al. 2005; Hörschelmann & Schäfer 2005), diary keeping (Punch 2001; Latham 2003) and forms of particular participatory methods like participatory diagramming (Kesby 2000; Pain & Francis 2003). The underlying assumption of using these methods is that they allow younger people to express themselves more fully (see also James et al. 1998) and that they create a less hierarchical relationship between the adult researcher and the young researched. Participatory research methods aim to:

- minimise the power-imbalance between the adult-researcher and the young-researched (see Alderson 1995, 2000);
- give young people a say as they gain more control over the research-process in aiming for shared decision making and knowledge-production (see Hart 1997; Barry 1996; Leyshon 2002; Kemmis & McTaggart 2005);
- help young people to develop and practice new skills that support and improve young people's self-esteem (see Kellett et al. 2004). The active and in-depth engagement with a special subject furthermore supports the development of young people's communication skills and critical thinking (see Kellett 2005a) and 'empowers' them through the development of new skills of negotiation and awareness (see Barry 1996);
- give children and young people who lack the skills of literacy and oral communication the chance to find alternative ways of expression through, for example, the use of visual research methods (Valentine 2001). This has become particularly important in the context of conducting research in developing countries (see Young & Barrett

2001a; Punch 2002c) or with very young children or children with specific learning difficulties. These methods are further described as being more *fun* and more interesting for young people. This may increase their interest and therefore their participation in the project (West 1998; Young & Barrett 2001a, 2001b);

- give a fuller understanding of the data as young people are involved in the data analysis as well (Alderson 2000);
- result in a growing awareness of the causes for social inequalities beyond the research project. Including young people in the dissemination of research results furthermore supports their writing, communication and organisational skills (see Kellett 2005a).

These beneficial outcomes are not only referred to in the academic literature but have also been acknowledged widely within the field of social work. The 'Plymouth Youth Work Curriculum Framework' (1999), for example, has highlighted that "[y]outh work recognises the benefits of positive and non-hierarchical contact between adults and young people" (City of Plymouth 1999: 3) to give young people a voice. The Report includes a description of the possible outcomes of such participatory work both for the young people themselves and for society more generally. It corresponds with the academic call for more participatory research that addresses the 'politics of childhood' (Valentine 1996: 597; see also Matthews and Limb 1999; Matthews et al. 1999) in giving young people a voice.

Regarding rural young people in East Germany, who are experiencing additional forms of exclusion and marginalization, the participatory research approach represents an appropriate way not only to uncover power-relations

that cause forms of social inequalities and to get a deeper insight into young people's lives but furthermore to engage with young people actively in a reflexive process of knowledge production. Participatory research methods aim to support the development of, for example, communication skills. This might increase participant's chances to benefit from the new possibilities and to cope with new forms of social inequalities in second modernity as already discussed (see Chapter 2). The following sections will discuss the methodological implications of following a participatory research approach and show how the aims and objectives of the thesis will be translated into the design of a participatory oriented research project.

4.2 Designing a participatory research project *with, for* and *on* young people

With regard to methodological and ethical considerations of researching young people's lives social scientists have argued that participation should not be reduced to the set of particular methods but rather needs to be understood as a methodological approach that effects the entire project design (see Matthews, Limb & Taylor 1998; Matthews & Limb 1999; Alderson 2000; Christensen & James 2000; Kesby 2000; Pain & Francis 2003; Christensen 2004; Kesby 2005, 2007a, 2007b). I thus aimed to develop a methodology that acknowledged young people's agency and heterogeneity and gave them a voice in engaging them actively in the research process. Matthews and Limb (1999) have described the ethical and methodological considerations of researching young people's lives as follows:

"Giving children a voice involves much more than just encouraging young people to express their views about places. It depends as well upon providing adequate information, listening, treating children's views with respect, providing feedback on decisions, and getting children to take responsibility for actions and outcomes which they are competent and willing to make".

My research follows this understanding. To conceptualise the development of a participatory research approach, I worked with Hart's (1997) ladder of participation which represents different levels of participation that can be reached in the research with young people. In accordance to Arnstein's (1969) model, Hart (see figure 4.1) identifies eight different levels of how research on young people can be done while he identifies the first three bottom rungs as 'non-participatory' levels.

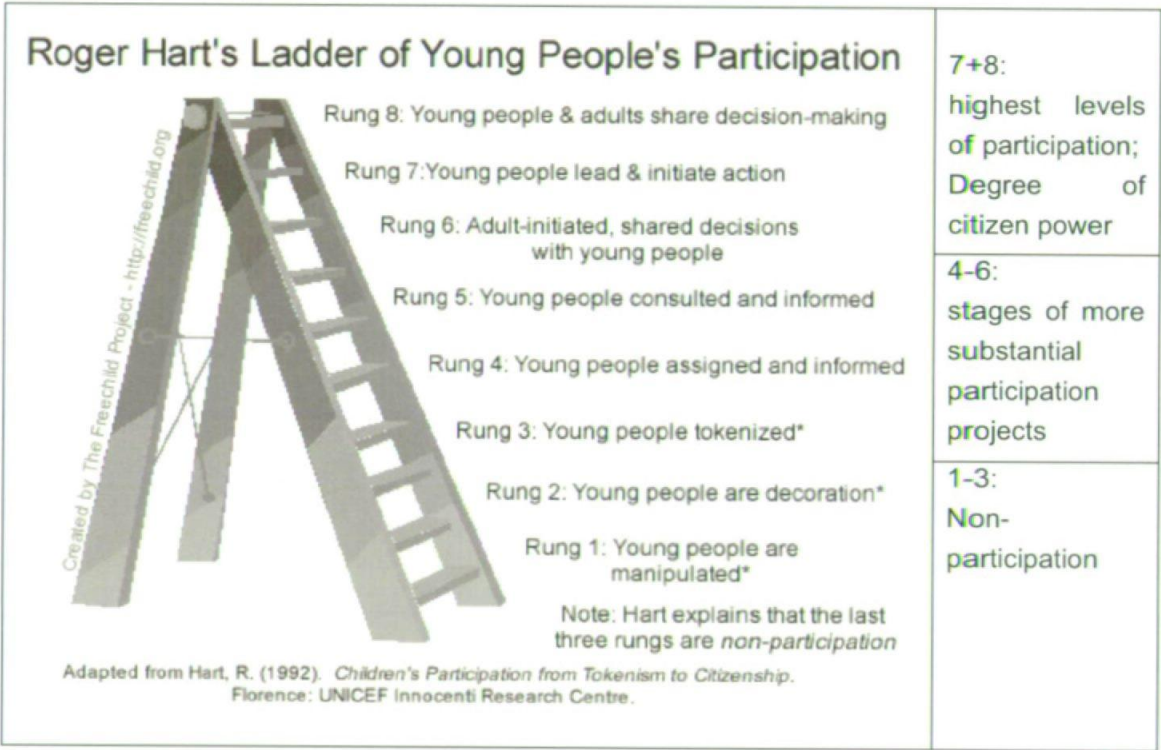


Figure 4. 1: Hart's (1997) Ladder of Young People's Participation
 (Source: The Freechild Project: <http://www.freechild.org/ladder.htm> [accessed: 29.11.2005])

Hart describes the fourth level as the first stage which enables the provision of a more substantial participatory research project (see Hart 1997:

40ff). From this level on, children and young people are fully informed and have the opportunity to actively engage with the project. It is only at level 5, however, that they are actively consulted, for example, with regard to the analysis or result-discussions. The sixth level is reached when young people are involved in some degrees of the process through shared-decision making. A very high level of participation, reached at the 7th rung is characterised as the level where young people initiate and direct their own projects.

I want to highlight that Hart's highest level of participation refers to *shared decision making* between adults and young people. This refers back to the understanding that the success and the outcome of a project and its participatory potential are highly dependent on its embeddedness in the local context (Hart 1997). Referring to Foucault's understanding of power, Kesby (2005) argues that the discourses and practices constituting empowerment and participatory research are - like all social relations - embedded in and constitutive of particular material sites and spaces. Calling for a more coherent theorisation of spaces of participation Kesby (2005: 2056) argues that "while it [participatory space] is brought into being by performances that facilitate empowerment, relations constituted elsewhere may curtail empowered performances within it". To facilitate sustained performances of empowerment it is essential to identify the different power relations that characterise people's everyday spaces so that they can be re-performed within and beyond the participatory arena (see also Schäfer & Yarwood 2008).

Hart (1997: 42) has further highlighted, that it is "not necessary that children always operate at the highest possible rungs of the ladder of participation. An important principle to remember is *choice*". Developing a participatory research project one has to consider that young people's abilities

to participate can be restricted due to their age, particular competencies of each child as well as due to “cultural attitudes to children’s participation” (Hart 1992: 42). The latter aspect has to be particularly taken into account as participation, according to Matthews and his colleagues (1999), is still often conceived to be ‘an adult activity’.

It also means that including young people more actively does not automatically guarantee giving them a voice. Hart (1997) has pointed out that even children’s conferences, for example, where children are literally been put on a stage to be seen and be given a microphone to be heard, can run the risk of becoming tokenism as “[i]t is common for articulate, charming children to be selected by adults to sit on panels, with little opportunity to consult with their peers whom they purportedly represent” (Hart 1997: 41). In accordance to this, Matthews (2001b: 155) has argued that young people’s involvement in youth councils can actually “disempower young people in an area if they only represent a certain section of the youth population, such as from a particular neighbourhood or social background” (see also Matthews 2001a). Including young people in research does thus not automatically guarantee participation.

Hart (1997) further points out that young people may not wish to be integrated at the highest level of participation. This is, from my point of view, a valuable and all too often overlooked consideration which has to be taken more seriously to avoid the danger that participation is becoming the new ‘tyranny’ (Cooke & Kothari 2001). Referring to the increasing popularity of participatory research West (1999: 145) has in this context warned that the superficial application of participation runs the risk to “believe its purposes”.

Acknowledging that young people’s agency is not only practiced in their decision to participate but is equally reflected in their decision not to get

involved (see Hill 2006), I introduced myself and the project in the schools so that young people could make an informed decision about whether they wanted to get involved with the project or not. To be able to take young people's needs, abilities and interests into account I further aimed to develop a research design which offered participants multiple ways and very different levels of engagement and which was flexible enough to include young people's interests and needs. It meant, for example, that key themes were developed together with participants right from the beginning. I further followed a multi-method approach which did not only offer the chance of triangulation (Denzin 1989; Spicer 2004) but allowed young people to choose from a wide range of innovative research methods like drawings, taking photographs and so on to express their ideas creatively. The combination of different methods aimed to offer complementary insights into young people's world which may have been difficult to access through reliance on a single method of data collection (Darbyshire et al. 2005).

Academics have recently started to discuss the engagement of young people in research *as researchers* as a way to recognise children and young people as social agents, cultural producers and experts of their own lives. It aims to acknowledge that young people's life worlds, their experiences of spaces and places differ from those of adults and that they are therefore "the best resource" for understanding youth (Corsaro 1997: 103; see also Kellett 2005a). It is argued that young people's involvement in research as interviewers offers a deeper insight into young people's lives as they identify relevant topics and discuss them more openly and freely with their peers than they would with an adult researcher (see Alderson 1995; Lansdown 2001; Kellett et al., 2004). Considering that young people and children "ask different questions, have different priorities and concerns and see the world through different eyes"

(Kellett 2005a: 3) this method can make an "important contribution to knowledge [that] can only be made by children themselves". Including young people as researcher can thus offer a genuine perspective into young people's lives. At the same time it supports the aim of minimising unequal power relations between adult researcher and young researched, and to facilitate shared decision making.

A few studies on childhood and youth have employed this method to get a deeper insight into young people's lives and to give them a voice. The ways in which this has been put into practice vary immensely. It ranges from engaging young people to act as researchers carrying out interviews that were designed by adults (Baker et al. 1996) and children's involvement into specific stages of the research project like the development of research questions and interview schedules (Warren 2000) to the attempt to involve children at all stages of the research process that sometimes even includes research training (see Alderson 1995; West 1999; Alderson 2000; Jones 2004; Kellett et al. 2004).

Involving young people as researchers is a highly valuable approach that has *the potential* to acknowledge and highlight young people's agency and thus to challenge inequalities between them. I have argued elsewhere (Schäfer & Yarwood 2008), however, that if this method is applied independently from young people's needs and interests and the broader context they are living in this can turn into a research practice that risks to exclude structurally certain groups of young people (see also Vandenbroeck & Bie 2006) and that can reproduce existing inequalities. It means that young people's involvement in research as researchers should *not* be discussed as a new research paradigm (as discussed by Kellett 2005b) as it would assume that this technique guarantees a solution to marginalisation and exclusion. This runs the risk of

promoting a *tyranny of the method* (Cooke & Kothari 2001) which disconnects research approaches and methods from the research context.

To offer young people the opportunity of deciding at which level they wanted to be engaged in the project and which form of participation they were most comfortable with, I offered research training to all participants at the beginning of the project. It has to be highlighted, however, that their participation in the training session did not oblige them to take over the role of a researcher. In addition the training was not over in one session. The whole research project was rather understood as a 'participatory arena' (see Kesby 2005, 2007a) which offered multiple insights into the ways in which research can be done and opportunities for participants to try things out themselves.

The first focus group discussion, which generally took place a week after the training session, was seen as another way to give young people an example of how discussions can be held. After we finished this first discussion I showed participants the thematic guideline I had prepared for the session. This insight into my preparation and way of working represented an important step to make the project transparent to students. It supported the aim of making young people more familiar with the role of the interviewer by taking me as an example. It demonstrated that I did not insist on claiming a right of the role of interviewer but was willing to share it with participants.

In the second and third focus group discussion I asked young people to choose and prepare their own topics of interest and encouraged them to conduct the interview without me (I would wait outside the room until I was asked to join the group again. I did not set any time restriction and peer-led interviews lasted between 5 and 45 minutes). That means that before young people decided if they wanted to develop their own research projects and to

interview other young people (or adults) outside the group, they had the chance to familiarise themselves with the role of the interviewer. The focus group discussions opened up a safe space to try out and develop personal interview skills. While the training session was developed in line with the recommendations developed by scholars like Alderson (1995, 2000), Kellett (2005a) and Fraser et al. (2004), I want to emphasise that young people's specific communication skills had a major effect on the way that it was conducted (see Schäfer & Yarwood 2008).

4.2.1 Site of study and sampling procedure

As already discussed in Chapter 1, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (MV) was chosen as a site of study because it can be characterised as a dominantly rural federal estate (Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung 2000, 2005) and is situated in post-socialist Germany. In the following I describe the sampling procedure and give the rationale for deciding on:

- Studying young people over a longer period of time
- Including 9 groups in the project
- Focusing on two different age levels
- Including different types of schools
- Choosing the actual research area

As long term studies with smaller groups of young people are seen as a way to get a more complex insight into young people's lives and to increase young people's involvement in the study (Baker et al. 1996) and to build up rapport

with the participants (Leyshon 2002) I aimed to work with each group of young people over several weeks if not several months, depending on participant's interest and enthusiasm. I thus planned to move into and stay in the research area for a minimum of 3 months.

Empirical research has further shown that young people's perception of their rural environment is affected by age (see Matthews et al. 2000; Glendinning et al. 2003; Giddings & Yarwood 2005). To analyse in how far age impacts on young people's experiences of inclusion and exclusion within the rural community and on their perception of the post-socialist transformation process I thus included *two different age levels*: a) young people of the age of 14 years (8th grade) and b) young people of the age of 16 years (10th grade)⁵.

Including 16 year olds in the study meant that these participants were already in their final year of school (except those who were planning to go into higher education) and were thus likely to be actively engaged in writing job-applications and defining their future aims. Further, their use and perception of space could differ from that of the 14 year old participants, as young people from the age of 16 are allowed to get a driving-license for small capacity motorcycles. They are also allowed to stay in restaurants and night-clubs until midnight, to purchase beer and cigarettes and – in the case of MV – to vote at the regional elections (Bundesministerium für Familie 2004). A comparison

⁵ Initially, I had aimed for a bigger age gap between the groups including students from 5th, 6th or 7th grade (11 to 13 year olds) as research has indicated that young people's contentedness with their rural environments seem to decrease from the age of 13 (see Matthews et al. 2000). However, when I negotiated access to the students with the head of schools several problems occurred. Firstly, all head of schools supported the idea to hand out the questionnaires to students before the summer holidays as teachers had more time in lessons to explain the context and aim of the research and to distribute the questionnaires at the end of the school year. It meant, however, that questionnaires could not be distributed to those who would start with year 5 after the summer holidays. In addition, schools had excursions or school placements planned at the beginning of year 6 and or 7 which limited the accessibility to those students. Four out of five heads of schools thus recommended and supported including students from grade 8 and 10.

between the two age groups would allow analysing in how far present day experiences within their local environment may affect the development of future plans including, for example, their migration motives. This age-differentiation meant that I worked with two groups of young people per school (one group of 8th grade students and one of 10th grade student). A total number of five schools were contacted to work with a maximum of 10 groups altogether. I finally worked only with 9 groups because one of the schools does not include 10th grade students.

Aiming for the approach to be as inclusive as possible and to give all students the opportunity of making an informed decision about participating in the project, I presented the project in each school to students from one class in grade 8 and one in grade 10 (with ca. 15-20 pupils in each class)⁶. I aimed to include female and male students which allowed me to look at differences and similarities between them. This also meant that I kept the final sample size relatively open, to be able to offer every student who wanted to participate in the project the chance to do so. After the initial information session, I met with those who expressed interest in the project and agreed the day and time of our weekly meetings. The number of students who wanted to participate varied from 5-11 students per class. This meant that the final sample included 67 students (36 female, 31 male students).

My next criterion was to include young people from *different social backgrounds*. This refers back to the hypothesis that new disadvantages and discrepancies between young people's daily lives and future prospects still exist and that they are highly dependent on their social class (see Chapter 3). In this

⁶ Three out of the five participating schools had several classes in each year. In these cases heads of schools, class teachers and I decided together which class to approach according to availability and access issues.

context it becomes important that the German school system separates children according to their academic ability after the 4th grade (at the age of ten). They then go on to different types of schools. This schools system has been criticised for reproducing social inequalities among young people particularly because it means that children attend different kinds of schools leading to different degrees and thus limiting their future options from a very early age⁷. Research in the German context has shown that young people's social background is often highly related with the type of secondary school they go to. Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds thus are often less likely to achieve a qualification which allows them, for example, to go into higher education (see Hartmann 2002; Geißler 2004; Allmendinger 2006; PISA Consortium Deutschland 2007).

To include young people from different social backgrounds I therefore included the different types of secondary schools that are existent in the research area. Table 4.1 shows the distribution of the different types of school within the Müritz region:

⁷ Children in Germany start school at the age of 6. From grades 1-4 they attend elementary school (*Grundschule*). After the 4th grade, they are separated according to their academic ability and the wishes of their families, and then attend one of the different kinds of schools: *Hauptschule*, *Realschule* or *Gymnasium*. Qualifications from the *Hauptschule* (grades 5-9) and the *Realschule* lead to enrollment in vocational schools. It is possible for students with high academic achievement at the *Realschule* to switch to a *Gymnasium* on graduation. In Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Haupt- and Realschule are often combined to *Regionalschulen*. The *Gymnasium* (grades 5-13 in most states) leads to a degree called the *Abitur* which prepares students for going into higher education. Students with physical or mental learning difficulties attend another type of school which is called *Förderschule* (grade 5-9) (for further information see Federal Ministry of Education and Research 2004).

	Förderschule	Regionale Schule and Realschule	Gymnasium	Schools in total
No. of schools	3	11	4	18
No. of schools in %	17%	62%	22%	100%
Ratio for research sample	1	3	1	5

Table 4.1: Types and numbers of secondary schools in the Müritz region
(Source: Statistisches Landesamt Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2003b: 8)

In accordance with the distribution of school-types within the research area I included one 'Gymnasium', three 'Regionalschulen' and one 'Förderschule'. Including participants from 'Förderschulen' was particularly important because this school type represents special needs schools for young people with learning difficulties. These schools represent the lowest educational level which young people can achieve in Germany. Young people from these schools are often characterised as 'problem kids' due to their communication and concentration difficulties. This group of young people is often neglected in academic research as it is labelled as difficult to work with. It means that these young people are particularly under-represented in youth research and thus marginalised. They are, however, the ones who are most likely to stay in the region (Elder & Meier 1997). Being at risk to get 'trapped' within the local labour market due to their poor educational credentials this group of young people is very likely to experience reduced life-chances (Shucksmith 2000). That is why it was all the more important, to give these young people a voice and to include them in the study.

Particularly in the context of researching children from lower socio-economic backgrounds, with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, it has been argued that young people's age, their physical and mental ability are crucial in

deciding on the use of appropriate methods (see West & Mitchell 1998; Stalker 2002). In addition, it is generally argued that the chosen research methods need to match children's and young people's level of understanding, knowledge and interests (Greene & Hill 2006). However, researchers have more recently highlighted that "limitations to young children's competence as respondents are generally the limitations of those who interview them" (Brooker 2006:164). Seeing young people as social agents and experts of their own lives, I aimed to offer each group of pupils the same opportunities of becoming involved in the project. This was particularly important as it is increasingly argued that the researcher's understanding of the abilities of a specific child/group of children might result in a reconstruction of differences. This might result in homogenizing children's experiences and denying them the same rights and choices as other children (Davis et al. 2007).

To treat each group of participants as equally as possible, I had planned, for example, to offer research training to all participants. The head and class teacher of the Förderschule highlighted right from the beginning, however, that they thought their students would not be able to follow the training, nor should they be trusted to handle a video camera and so on. In my first meetings with the teachers I tried to explain that their students could not 'fail'. If they would be unable to answer a question or fulfill a specific task it would rather be me who 'failed' as it was my responsibility to make information accessible to them, to ask clear questions and so on. Not really convinced about the contribution their students could make to the project, the teacher/head teacher finally gave me the permission to talk to their students and get the project started. While I had to make adjustments, for example, with regard to the amount of information, length of training and the level of practical exercises (see also Schäfer and Yarwood

2008), it became evident that the *Förderschule* students' abilities to concentrate, to take on responsibilities, and to listen to others seemed to increase over time. It indicates that the value and attitudes of children's participation, which characterize the contexts young people grow up in, might impact on their ability to participate (see Hart 1992).

The final decision to focus on the *Landkreis Müritz* (see Figure 4.2) was made with regard to the opportunity to commute between different villages and access the different types of school within a radius of 50 km. It further allowed me to build up a network of experts not only within the local communities but also at the regional and national level. I had been offered an office at the Department of Sociology/University of Potsdam for the time of my research and further was in contact with a number of research institutions in Berlin. The *Landkreis Müritz* is situated in the South of MV and is less than 200km away from Berlin (see Chapter 1). It enabled me to commute between Berlin, Potsdam and my research area on a regular basis.

The five schools that participated in the research project were situated in three small towns and were in radius of 50km. Three of the schools (the Gymnasium, one Regionalschule and the *Förderschule*) were situated in Röbel while the two other Regionalschulen were in Rechlin and Penzlin and were very similar in their number of students as well as with regard to the size of the towns as shown in Table 4.2 below.

Type of school	Number of students	Town	Size of town (inhabitants)
Gymnasium	463	Röbel	5,450
Regionalschule	304		
Förderschule	82		
Regionalschule	217	Rechlin	2,323
Regionalschule	225	Penzlin	2,547

Table 4.2: Participating schools

(Source: Ministerium für Bildung 2004; Statistisches Landesamt M-V 2005)

Every second participant (n=32) was living in one of the three towns where the schools were situated. The other participants came from villages with 400-700 inhabitants (n=19) or with less than 100 inhabitants (n=17). Before getting in contact with the participants I had to apply for an official permission from the Ministry of Education in Germany to get access to schools. After representatives of the Ministry had checked the project I was allowed to send a letter to the head of schools of five schools in the research area to inform them about the research project and to evaluate their general interest in supporting the study. In all cases a personal meeting was agreed with the head of school which took place as soon as I arrived in Germany (June 2004). Table 4.3 gives an overview of the planned research project and its actual realisation:

Time scale	Description of stage of the project	Planned Schedule	Actual Research
February 2004	Applying for permission at the Ministry of Education/Germany		
May 2004	Permission granted to conduct the research Project (given by the Ministry of Education/Germany)		
May 2004	Contact with schools (postal, per telephone or email)	5 schools (2 classes per school) → total: 10 classes	5 schools (2 classes per school except in the case of the Förderschule) → total: 9 classes
June 2004 Moving to Germany	Contact with schools Meeting with head of schools and class-teacher		
	Questionnaire	ca: 200 questionnaires	124 questionnaires (out of around 180)
August/September 2004	Informal meeting with young people in schools	ca. 10 lessons	9 lessons
September/October 2004	Training participants	Ca. 10 groups a 2 pupils each Total: 10 sessions	Total: 9 two and a half hours training sessions with 5-11 participants (total: 60 participants)
October-December 2004	(Peer-led) focus groups (FGs)	2-3 FGs with each group = 20-30 FGs	3-4 FGs with each group → total of 29 FGs
January-March 2005 <i>In accordance to young people's interest</i>	<i>Final Projects?</i>	(10 projects)	8 projects Between 1 and 4 meetings per group
March 2005: Moving back to Plymouth/ UK			

Table 4.3: Planned and actual research schedule of the project
(Source: Author)

Only the questionnaire, the first contact and the first focus group discussion was designed in advance without the consultation of the young people. After that, however, students' influence on the creation of the research project increased. In addition, a period of three months (between January and March 2005) was included into the research design which allowed enough time develop the project further in co-operation with students. It means that the project can be divided in different phases representing different levels of participation. In accordance to Hart's participation ladder (1992) the different phases are described as the table 4.4 below:

Hart's participation ladder (1992)	Key characteristics (adapted from Hart 1992)	Aimed level of participation for own research project
8) Young people & adults share decision-making	Climate of trust necessary Adults facilitate young people Involvement of adult gatekeepers necessary to allow participation beyond the research project	- - - Participant led (research) projects: Offering young people the chance to develop and conduct their own project with the researcher as a facilitator and advisor. Aim to embed the project in the local context → <i>How</i> and <i>if</i> this should be done had to be elaborated with young people.
7) Young people lead & initiate action	Adults help without directing	Shared decision on dissemination and way of contacting other young people and adults. Provision of financial, conceptional and organizational support and of access to technical equipment (video-camera, photo-camera, digital recorder and so on). Additional focus group discussion
6) Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people	Children are involved in the entire process	2nd and 3rd Focus group Focus groups: partly led by young people (peer-led). Topics partly chosen by participants.
5) Young people consulted and informed	Include young people more actively, take them serious. Can mean involvement in analysis.	1st Focus group Thematic guideline reflecting on topics worked out together with participants in informal session and preliminary findings from questionnaire.
4) Young people assigned and informed	Can build the first stage of more substantial participation projects; children are informed and engaged but no influence on project itself	Informal Meeting Making the project transparent for young people (informed and voluntary consent); explain their role within it; addressing them as knowledge experts. Questionnaire (lowest level of participation)
3) Young people Tokenized	Non-participation	-
2) Young people as decoration		-
1) Young people are manipulated		-

Table 4.4: Phases of the research project and level of young people's participation (Source: Author, in accordance to Hart 1997)

It was thus aimed to increase young people's involvement in and their control over the project with time. The implications were that the research design was kept open to react to young people's abilities, ideas and wishes which reflects on the assumption that participation has to be understood as the outcome of a process of co-operation between the researcher and the ones being researched. It has to be seen as a *process* which requires time to increase their degree of engagement (see also Pain and Francis 2003).

However, my research was limited with regard to reaching the highest level of participation. To allow young people's involvement and participation beyond the research project it would have been necessary to develop a much more complex project that included both adult community members and young people and aimed to open up space for challenging power-relations between them. Due to time limits of this research and the chosen focus on young people's inclusion in the research project I faced limits of achieving the highest level of participation.

Table 4.5 shows how many and what kind of meetings took place with each group. Altogether, 67 young people in the age between 14 and 16 years took part in the project and participated between five to ten weeks. A total amount of 29 focus groups were conducted while eight out of nine groups decided to participate further and to develop their own (research) project.

	Participating groups	No. of participants per group	No. of informal meeting (whole class)	No. of training session	No. of Focus Groups	No. of project meetings	Total no. of weeks participating ¹
Gymnasium	8 th grade	7	1	1	3	2	7
	10 th grade	11	1	1	3	1	6
Regionalschule Röbel	8 th grade	5	1	1	3	1	6
	10 th grade	8	1	1	4	4	10
Regionalschule Rechlin	8 th grade	8	1	1	3	3	8
	10 th grade	11	1	1	4	3	9
Regionalschule Penzlin	8 th grade	6	1	1	3	2	7
	10 th grade	6	1	1	3	-	5
Förderschule ²	8 th grade	5	1	1	3	2	7
	Do not have 10 th grade	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	9 groups	67	9	9	29	18	
Session Videotaped			no	yes	yes	yes	
Session audio taped			no	yes	yes	yes	
Sessions transcribed (T) or summarised (S)			S	S	T	S	

Table 4.5: Meetings with research participants

(Source: Author)

¹ Including the informal meeting, training session, focus group meetings and meetings to create their own project. This does not include young people's participation in the workshop, nor their attendance at the exhibition in which the elaborated group projects were shown.

² The Förderschule includes only classes from the 5th to the 9th grade. Due to comparability it was decided to include only the 8th grade of this school.

In the following section I discuss how I aimed to facilitate different levels of participation within the research project.

4.2.2 Embedding the research project

As already discussed young people's participation is often highly dependent on adult gatekeepers. Social scientists have thus argued that it is important to see negotiations with gatekeepers as an essential aspect of our

research process (see Hart 1997; Corsaro & Molinari 2000; Harden et al. 2000; Aitken 2001; Matthews 2001c; Valentine 2003; Kesby 2005, 2007a). Through building up a network with local and regional (adult) gatekeepers as shown in the following figure I thus aimed to get a better understanding of the context participants were growing up in and to facilitate negotiations between young people and adult gate-keepers if participants were interested in it (see Figure 4.2):

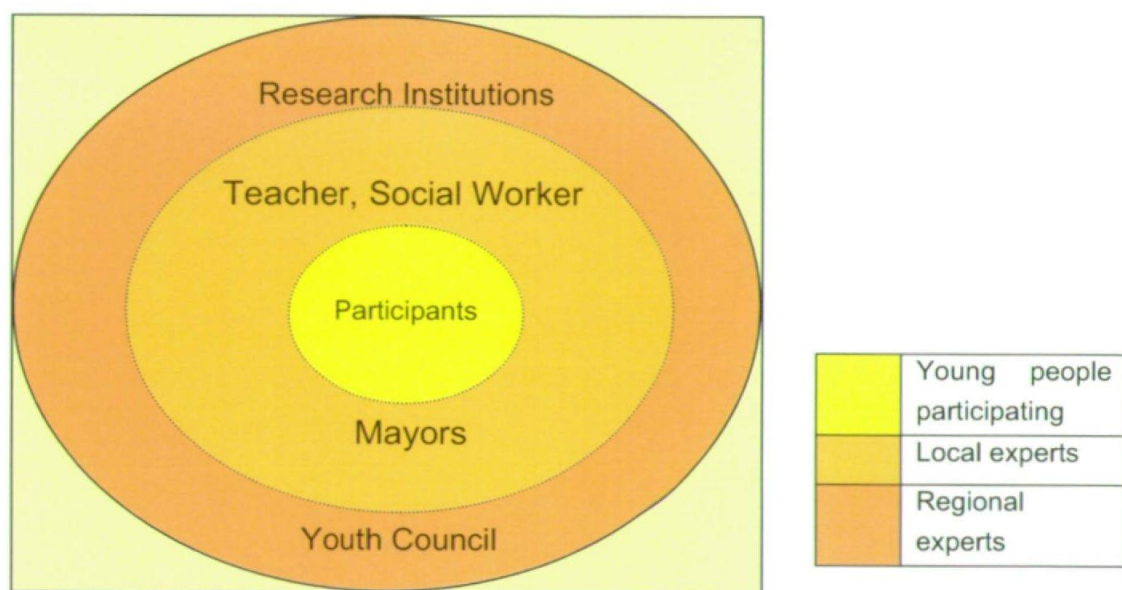


Figure 4.2: Embedding the research project in the local and regional context
(Source: Author)

I built up a network that included experts from different levels:

- 1) Adult gatekeeper who play an important role in the direct local context of young people's daily life on the countryside like *teachers and social worker*.
 - 2) Experts who are in the position to make decisions affecting young people's lives regionally like representatives of the *Youth Council*, and for example the *Thünen institute*, a research-institution which works on regional development and which is situated in Röbel, one of my sites of studies.
- Furthermore I got in contact with Camino gGmbH, a research institute which

started with a study in November 2004 on rural young people's live in five rural East German areas (including the Landkreis Müritz).

The following interviews were conducted with key experts who were working directly with or doing research on young people or were involved in decision-making that affect young people's daily lives (see table 4.6).

Key informants (No. of interviews)	Themes covered in the interviews
Head of schools (5)	Organised school activities, position of school within the community. Range of students, particular problems. Understanding of 'typical youth behaviour' and future prospects of young people within and beyond the region. Identification of services and facilities available for young people and what would be needed to keep young people in the rural region.
Mayors of villages (2)	Specific characteristics of the town/area. General situation (economical, political). Young people's position within the community. Future prospects and concerns.
Representatives from the youth council and youth services (3)	Particular situation of young people in the region. Services and facilities for young people. Financial possibilities and restrictions. Identification of future needs and concerns.
Researchers whose work concentrates on agricultural and regional development (3)	Information on regional studies that have been or will be conducted in the area. Identification of socio-economic, cultural and political specific of the area. Reflection on the development since reunification and future prospects. Discussion on young people's present and future life prospects in the area. Exchange of research results and discussion on preliminary findings of my study.

Table 4.6 Key informants and interview topics
(Source: Author)

These interviews were used to get a better understanding of the contexts of young people's everyday lives in the research area. I had to draw a line on whom else to engage and that the level of participation of the adults was

restricted in so far that the main focus was on young people. It further meant that I did not include interviews with, for example, parents or other family members, although I gained insights into understandings of adult community members through participant observation during the three months I lived in the research area.

4.2.3 Getting access to young people on the countryside: School as a site of study

To access participants through and to conduct research in schools has been criticised by a number of academics. James and her colleagues (1998), for example, argue that schools should not be chosen as a site of study as they are characterised by a clear power hierarchy between teachers and pupils, which means that this environment is connected with normative assumptions how children should behave. In accordance with this, Aitken (1994) has highlighted the spatial strategies of control and disciplining in schools that “socialize children with regard to their roles in life and their places in society” (ibid: 90). This has led to the conclusion that “school based research is not ‘participatory’ in any sense of the word” (Morrow 2001: 257).

However, access through schools offered the opportunity to represent the diversity of young people’s voices within the research area and to include a wide range of young people with different interests, social background etc. In addition, contacting a wider number of young people within a rural area can be problematic as they are characterized by a sparse population (see Leyshon 2002). This, as well as the following considerations, was taken into account in choosing school as a site of study:

- a) The smaller the villages the poorer the supply of institutional leisure facilities (like youth- or sports clubs) through which access to young people could be gained. Particularly to reach young people from very small villages it was thus impossible to rely on such institutional facilities. This consideration seems to be particularly important with regard to the research area as the supply of institutional leisure facilities is much poorer than in West Germany which means that less young people are organised in clubs and societies than in the West (see Fuhs 1996).
- b) Focusing only on institutional leisure facilities may furthermore exclude young people who are not making use of these clubs and societies. It thus runs the risk to focus on a group of young people with a very specific social background and specific interests without taking the diversity of young people's lives in the countryside into account.
- c) It also had to be considered that young people's use of public spaces in rural areas is highly restricted (Matthews et al. 2000). Further, young people's independent mobility and spatial autonomy appears to decrease in response to an increasing parental anxiety over their children's safety in public spaces (Valentine 1996, 1997; Valentine & McKendrick 1997; Valentine 2001). To access young people through public places thus did not seem to represent the best option.
- d) I further had to consider that I was a 'stranger' to the communities and that my aim to talk to young people could raise 'disquiet' (see Leyshon 2002: 182). This meant that I had to find a way to position myself within the community so that I was not perceived as a threat or danger to the communities. I thus had to develop a 'membership' or 'participant status' within the communities (Corsaro & Molinari 2000:180) so that I was

officially accepted and thus able to contact the young people. This was realised in building up contacts with adult gatekeepers first. Thus it was seen as inappropriate to just go there and 'hang out' with young people.

Accessing participants through schools was thus seen as an appropriate way to get access to a 'representative' sample of young people in the research area. In addition, the general criticism of this way of recruitment neglects that children "are not only subject to control by adults within the school, they also resist this control and form strategic alliances with adults to resist domination by other children" (Holloway & Valentine 2000: 774). It means that 'multiple geographies' are existent within the context of school that emerge from the "differences between official school policy, teacher's practices and pupil cultures, and the different time and spaces within the school" (Holloway & Valentine 2000: 771). With regard to the more difficult access to young people in the countryside and in reference to young people's agency, I rather argue that it might well be possible to create a participatory environment together with young people even within such highly adult-dominated and controlled spaces like schools. This can be supported, for example, by challenging participants use and experience of school spaces. Our focus group discussions were thus held in rooms which were either not used for normal teaching lessons (in one school we met in the youth club of the school) or we changed the composition of the rooms before we started to create a less formal atmosphere (by, for example, moving tables and chairs to form a corner for us where we could sit all together in a circle).

While choosing schools as a site of study had several advantages, it was also connected with a number of disadvantages. One of them was that other marginalized groups of young people such as school-leavers are not

represented in the study as no interviews were conducted with young people outside of schools. Conducting the research within the context of schools furthermore implied that there was often a clear time-constraint with regard to the length of the focus group discussions as we were highly dependent on the school-timetable and the support of head of schools and teachers. Further, the timetable of the school buses had a major impact on how long participants could stay for the group discussions.

4.2.4 The role of the researcher and participant observation

According to Hart's ladder of participation the role of the researcher in a participatory research project is to support young people's ideas and decisions. Hart (1992) describes the researchers as 'animators', 'promoters' and 'facilitators' (see also Cahill 2007). While I agree with this understanding, I was not very sure at the beginning, how to put this aim into practice. What did I have to do so that young people would see and accept me as their 'facilitator' and how could I give them the feeling that their opinions and thoughts are highly valuable?

In their empirical work with young people, academics have developed different ideas or advices, how this can be achieved. Corsaro and Molinari (2000: 180) for example argue that the researcher needs to develop a "participant status as an atypical, less powerful adult in research with young children". With regard to my position as an outsider, meeting young people within the context of their schools, I emphasised that I was neither a teacher nor was I interested in the teacher's lives or any other adult-perspective. I rather made very clear that only young people themselves could give an insight into

their life-worlds and that they were thus the experts on whom the whole research project was depending. In allowing students to address me by my first name⁸ I furthermore indicated that the project would be conducted in a very informal way and underlined that I did not see myself in the role of a teacher.

Harden et al. (2002) have highlighted that it is important to create rapport through, for example, sharing experiences before and during the interview which helps young people to relax and minimises the impact of social distance between the interviewer and the interviewees (see also Miller & Glassner 1997). I thus always allowed extra time before and after the sessions to stay around and chat with students. However, the most valuable comment on the role which an adult researcher should take on when researching young people is, from my point of view, expressed in the following description of Leyshon (2002: 181): "young people placed great value in who you are and how you talked to them". Trying to be less-adult or more child-like by for example using their slang could, according to Leyshon (2002), harm the researcher's credibility. I aimed not to be anyone else but a 29 year-old female researcher who was new to the region and had not lived in rural East Germany ever before. I had to be aware that the fact that I grew up in West Germany myself could have an impact on how I was perceived by young people as well as by adult members of the communities⁹. However, my aim was to be very honest with the students and to keep the aim of the research project, their role as well as my role within it as transparent as possible.

⁸ In Germany, neither in primary nor in secondary school is it allowed to call your teacher by their first name. This would be understood as disrespectful against the adult teacher and highlights the strong hierarchy between adults and young people in German schools. Even at University level it is still uncommon to address members of staff by their first name.

⁹ Although I thought young people and adult community members would realise very quickly that I was from West Germany they were often surprised when it came up in a conversation. When I asked them why they were so surprised about it they often said that they a) did not expect a West German to show any interest in their everyday lives and/or b) because they thought I was too friendly and open to be West German.

As soon as I was able to start with the information lessons I moved to Röbel, the biggest town included in my research study. Living in one of the three towns was not only connected with the benefit of being able to commute more easily between them and to be more flexible to react on time-changes in appointments with participants. Harden et al. (2000:3) have pointed out the difficulties in applying participant observation in the research on young people's lives as children are "used to seeing adults as different and, therefore, unlikely to accept them as one of themselves or to ignore their presence". However, living in one of the towns meant that young people got used to me spending my time at public spaces, cycling around, doing my shopping and so on which enabled me to make additional observations to the focus groups and, for example, to visit places young people described. Being included actively in the life of the family I was staying with (I was staying with a couple in their early fifties and their two sons in the age of 22 and 26 years) further enabled me to identify gatekeepers within the town as well as to partake in the everyday life and to chat with people of all ages on an informal basis. This gave me the opportunity to conduct participant observations which involved "living, working or spending periods of time in a particular 'community' in order to understand people's experiences in the context of their everyday lives" (Valentine 2001: 44). I recorded these observations in a daily research diary which provided additional information about the contexts young people were growing up in.

4.2.5 Methodological considerations of translating between languages

Following a social constructionist approach, which highlights that the researcher's location within the social world influences the way how he/she sees and interprets it, academics increasingly argue that foreign language based research has to acknowledge the processes of translation. It reflects on the understanding that "any translation seems always to be a reduced and distorted representation of other social texts and practices" (Smith 1996: 162). Translating research data from one language into another thus raises questions about translation as a political act (Sidaway et al. 2004). This includes critical reflections on the 'Anglo-American' domination in human geography (see Desbiens & Ruddick 2006; Rodríguez-Pose 2006). Further, practical methodological implications of translation in social sciences are addressed including: the researcher's and/or interpreter's own positionality; a reflection on how meaning is constructed and how it can be translated; and at which stage of the research data should be translated.

As a German native speaker, I was able to conduct the research myself. I assumed that my fluency in German would make my participants confident that I understood them and would interpret and represent their understandings appropriately. I was surprised, however, that I often had to demonstrate my fluency in English to them to confirm that I was based at an English University at that time and thus to prove my authenticity.

My main concern with regard to translation issues was around the decision at which stage of the project to translate research data into English. Temple and Young (2004) argue in this context that it is important not to "cut the ties between language and identity/culture" (p. 174) too early. The authors conclude

that delaying the act of translation for as long as possible might be one way to avoid the premature exclusion of meaning (see also Müller 2007).

Taking these considerations into account, I thus decided to transcribe the focus group discussions in German. The analysis of the data was also conducted in German which meant that identified quotations or findings from the questionnaire were only translated at the stage of writing up the PhD. To allow further transparency of the translation process for the reader, I also included the original German quotes in the Appendix. Being aware that the dissemination of research findings would mainly be done in English, I produced a report in German (Schäfer 2005b) which covered preliminary findings and which was available to all participants.

4.2.6 Ethical considerations

The ethical guidelines that are informing this research refer to the 'Ethical Principles for Research Involving Human Participants' of the University of Plymouth (2002 see Appendix A). This included a Criminal Records Check (CRC) which was then available for inspection by school staff, parents and participants at any time¹⁰. To address the German-specific requirements of conducting research in schools I further had to apply for permission at the State Ministry of Education which approved the project with regard of ethical consideration.

With regard to the participants an *informed and voluntary consent* (Alderson 2000) was obtained from them and their parental guardians as they

¹⁰ I want to point out that this CRC was not required at any point from the German side. Even the State Ministry of Education, which was proving the project and which had the final say in permitting the contact of the schools, did not ask for this. It shows how different ethical considerations are addressed in different countries.

were all under the age of 18 years. Furthermore, *confidentiality* was ensured by, for example, advising all participants to use a pseudonym when filling out the questionnaire or when they produced additional material in the process of the research. In the focus group discussions, young people chose to use their first names which have been replaced in the transcripts of the sessions by pseudonyms so that their original names do not appear in any publication or other contexts. Both parents and participants were asked if they allowed the focus groups to be tape-recorded and video-taped or not. I ensured that these records were and are not shown or published anywhere else without participants' permission. It was emphasised that confidentiality also applied for any kind of material which was produced during the research project (like photographs, videos, collages and mental maps). I further highlighted that participants had the *right to withdraw* from the research project at any point and that there were no right and wrong answers as I was interested in their experiences and opinions. At any time the *language* used remained clear and comprehensible to ensure that students were not overwhelmed with details or academic jargon which could result in feelings of exclusion (see Ali & Kelly 2004).

Scholars have argued that the ethical dimensions of research need to be considered particularly carefully with regard to conducting research with young people. This is due to young people's subordinate position and thus the potential abuse of the power-relationship between the adult researcher and the young researched (Ali & Kelly 2004). Ali and Kelly (2004) further argue that ethical guidelines for research with children have become increasingly important with the recognition of the high levels of abuse of children within families and institutional settings such as schools. Researchers have to be aware of

potential abuse of the imbalanced power-relationship between adult researcher and children that also justifies the criminal records check.

However, Alderson (1995) has in this context warned that an 'over-emphasis' on young people's 'otherness' and 'need of protection' can "result in children being treated as passive objects, rather than as active moral agents on their own right" (ibid: 68). Following this argument, Valentine and her colleagues (2001) have highlighted that the discussion on an ethical code for the research with young people runs the risk to homogenise them as a social category. This, however, neglects that some young people are more vulnerable than others and that particular ethical considerations may be needed depending on the specific needs, abilities of the young as well as with regard to the context they are living in. In agreement with these more critical voices I thus argue that the ethical considerations which were taken into account in this study apply not only to research on and with young people but more generally to research with marginalized and vulnerable groups.

4.3 Research methods

In the following sections I discuss the research methods in more detail. This will be done in accordance to the chronological order in which they were employed in the project and which reflects on the idea of increasing young people's control of and influence on the development of the project. Further, it will be shown how each method addressed the research aims and objectives of the study.

4.3.1 Questionnaire

As Hill (1997) has rightly pointed out, the questionnaire leaves children only little influence as it is a pre-determined and thus inflexible method with hardly any participatory potential. Nonetheless, this method was employed to provide quantifiable data with regard to the socio-economic background of the participants. The questionnaires were distributed in 10 classes (of ca. 15-20 pupils each) to get access to a larger number of young people in the research area which enabled me to get a better insight into young people's live contexts in the local area. In accordance to the research questions the questionnaire (see also Appendix B) concentrated on the following topics:

1. Socio-economic background of young people;
2. Queries about their perception of and relation to their place of residence to gain information about their understanding of their home town or home village;
3. Queries about how and where they spend their leisure time as well as their use of media to establish patterns of lifestyle behaviour particularly with regard to their use of space;
4. Questions about their future to establish where they see themselves in future which may give an insight into motives of leaving the area.

Questions further addressed experiences of inclusion and/or exclusion within the rural community, with regard to political decisions as well as their personal future prospects in the job market. The questionnaire consisted of 32 questions and was accompanied by an informal letter which explained the

purpose and use of the study and gave clear instructions how to fill out the questionnaire. It was emphasised that filling out the questionnaires was absolutely voluntary and that confidentiality was guaranteed so that neither their parents nor their teachers would have access to the questionnaires without participants' permission. Being asked to choose a fantasy-name at the beginning of the questionnaire instead of giving their actual name further guaranteed young people's anonymity.

However, the German Ministry of Education requested that questionnaires would be distributed by teachers and thus did not allow me to come into schools myself to introduce the project and to hand out the questionnaires at that point. To make sure that students could make an informed decision if they wanted to fill out the questionnaire, I met with the teachers before they distributed the questionnaires and gave them a leaflet of the main aims of the study, the aim of the questionnaire and discussed issues of confidentiality and anonymity with them. I did not have any further control, however, on how each teacher approached the distribution of the questionnaires and which information they passed on to the pupils. To address issues of confidentiality, I asked students to return their questionnaires in a sealed envelope to the school's secretary to minimize the risk and/or perception that teachers had access to the students' responses.

As students took the questionnaire home I was also unsure if they had filled them on their own. The return rate was 73% (n=124) which could be interpreted as young people's high interest in the research project. Due to the fact that I could not be involved in the introduction and distribution of the questionnaires, however, I decided to treat findings from the questionnaire as additional information to further contextualize the analysis of the qualitative data

I gathered. This means that the three analysis chapters will mainly focus on the qualitative data (only Chapter 6 refers to some findings from the questionnaire).

Receiving most of the filled-out questionnaires in July 2004 (only one school did not manage to return the questionnaires before the summer holidays) enabled me to use preliminary findings from the questionnaire to inform my first meeting with the young people. Further, it informed the first group discussion as it gave me a general insight, for example, into the specific places young people used in their community, which places they liked most, what general ideas they had about their future and so on. The questionnaire thus can be seen as an important way of getting an understanding of issues that are relevant for young people. At the same time it offers valuable insights into the socio-economic situation and experiences of young people in the local area.

4.3.2 Informal meeting: Introducing the project to the young people

As it was aimed to develop the research project *with* participants, an informational meeting with young people was designed to introduce the project and discuss young people's role within it. I obtained permission of all schools to meet the pupils for one school-lesson (45 minutes) at the beginning of the new school-year in August or September 2004. I prepared this first meeting with the young people with regard to the following two aims:

- a) To make the research project, its purpose, aim and design as transparent as possible so that young people are able to make a free and informed decision if they want to participate in the project or not.

- b) To address young people as experts with regard to their own life-worlds and to highlight that this project is not only *on*, but *with* and *for* them. This includes that the research design, the methods chosen as well as the topics discussed will be negotiated and developed together with the young people.

To achieve these aims, I structured the meeting as follows:

1) *Informative part*: In order to offer young people an insight into the purpose of the research, I gave an overview of the main aims of the project. I introduced a possible framework so that students would get a feeling for the time-frame of the whole project (see table 4.7) even though it could change depending on young people's interest and engagement in the project. The rough timeframe, however, enabled young people to make a voluntary and informed decision if they wanted to participate in the project or not.

Activity	Proposed Schedule	Time
a) Informed consent from parents and young people to fill out questionnaire	(before the summer holidays June 2004)	
b) Informative meeting	1 st week	45 minutes
c) Training session	2 nd week	Ca. 2 to 2 ½ hours
d) Focus Groups	3 rd week 4 th week 5 th week ? more if interested	Ca. 1 hour each
e) Final project to summarize results	Depending on interest; probably 3-5 further meetings	Depending on interest

Table 4.7: Rough timeframe for the research project
(Source: Author)

I highlighted that I aimed to conduct at least three focus groups with each group of students to get a comparable amount of data that represented the core of the project. Young people would be given, however, multiple options to get involved in the research design. The only strict time limit which I had was March 2005 as I had to return to the UK at that point. I further pointed out that participants had the right to withdraw from the project at any point.

I finished this introductory informative part in explaining how students could benefit from participating in the project:

- a. Participation in an international oriented research project which offers an insight in academic research
- b. Possibility to participate in the development and realization of the research project to make it 'your' project
- c. To discuss topics that are relevant to you which you can discuss with other young people.
- d. To experiment with different research methods and a wide range of research equipment (video-camera, dictaphone, photo-camera and so on)
- e. To get a German and an English certificate that confirms the participation in the project and the skills learned. This can be added to the CV for future job applications
- f. Learning new skills in interview techniques and data analysis
- g. In accordance with your interests: developing and conducting your own project on a topic relevant to you

2) *Images of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern*: For this second part of the introductory session I had collected a wide range of material from newspapers, the internet and academic articles (see Appendix C) to show young people how their region was perceived and reported on from 'outsiders'¹¹. In addition, I had prepared a five minute audio-tape of interviews (see Appendix D) with six young adults at the ages of 26 to 32 about their image of *Mecklenburg-Vorpommern* and 'East German youth'. These young adults were randomly picked (mostly German) friends of mine who had never lived in *Mecklenburg-Vorpommern* themselves (one interviewee came from Devon, UK). Rather than just relying on texts and pictures, I hoped that listening to these voices of other (East and West German) young adults would engage participants in a vivid discussion on their own understandings of the region they were growing up in. After the introduction of this material students identified key themes to which the newspapers, interviewees and so on had referred to describing *Mecklenburg-Vorpommern*.

3) *Young people's image of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern: an insider-perspective*:

In the last part of the meeting I asked the students if the image created by the media corresponded with their own perception of the region they grow up in. I encouraged students to create their own list of key topics which represented *their* feelings, experiences and perceptions of the region. These topics were put on the blackboard to discuss their relevance and meaning with the whole class. I highlighted that this list represented what I was interested in: young people's

¹¹ My aim was to find as diverse information as possible to give a complex insight into the different aspects and images the media uses to represent and report on MV. However, except for the tourist brochures and touristy internet pages that highlight the beauty of the region, the material I found mainly drew a rather negative image of life in MV referring to its socio-economic problems. While I have not done a media analysis myself, the problem of finding more positive reports on MV strengthened my impression that this negative image clearly dominates the general public discourse.

understanding of their everyday lives and that only they were in the position to offer such insights. This list of keywords created by students then informed the design of the first focus group discussion in the way that several topics were included which I had neglected before.

Although sometimes whole classes showed interest in participating in the study, the number of participants decreased to 5 to 11 pupils per class when it came to setting a date for the meetings. Several young people either had other commitments due to regular leisure activities like the membership in a sports club or saw difficulties in getting home after the sessions due to the poor public transport facilities. It often meant that the most remote students were not able to participate. However, I tried to overcome this problem in offering students to drive them home after the sessions or helping them organise getting a lift with one of their class-mates. In several cases I got in contact with the parents to find alternative ways to enable those students to participate ¹².

I want to highlight that these information session played an important part in addressing the research aims of the thesis in highlighting right from the beginning that young people were seen as experts of their own lives. This session laid the ground to enabling young people to become part of the project and make it their own project which in turn provided a deep insight into their understandings and experiences.

¹² Heads of schools frequently asked me if they should put a group of students together which they thought would be the most appropriate to participate (mostly referring to the best or calmer pupils in class). To avoid such pre-selection and thus to ensure that all young people in the class were provided with the opportunity to participate (Matthews 2001b) I adhered to introduce the project to the whole class. To find out if only the most active students signed in for the project I further asked the class teacher if the final group of participants represented the ones they would describe as the most dominant or 'best' pupils of the class. In all cases the teachers were surprised about the mix of the group indicating that it did not only represent the most active students or a group of friends but often included for example newcomers or pupils that were normally very shy or not interested in joining in discussions in the lessons and so on. However, I have no other proof that the students that participated are representative to the whole class.

4.3.3 Training Session

As already discussed, training young people in interview skills was seen as a way to minimise the power-imbalance between young people and the researcher, to get a deeper insight into young people's life worlds and to 'empower' them through the development of new skills of negotiation and awareness (see Barry 1996). The session lasted 2 ½ hours and was divided into two main parts: first, a theoretical introduction into qualitative and quantitative research methods was given to offer students an overview of the different kinds of interview techniques. It included discussions on, for example, the way interviews should be structured, what kind of ethical aspects needed to be considered and how interview-questions should be formulated. This then led to the second and more practical part of the session in which I introduced the technical equipment that was available for the research project and thus for participants to use. This included:

- A laptop onto which the digitally recorded interviews could be transferred to and video-projects could be edited on
- A digital recorder to record interviews
- A tape recorder to record interviews
- A microphone
- A digital video camera to record interviews and/or conduct video-projects
- A tripod for the video or photo camera
- A reflex camera and disposable photo cameras

Participants then had time to try out these instruments themselves. They could make use of the video camera, put it on the tripod, connected the camera with the TV, and checked the level of the batteries in the digital recorder and so on. The aim was that everyone in the group felt confident and comfortable in using this technical equipment.

After this exercise participants split up into groups of 2 or 3 to prepare a guideline for a short interview on a topic of their choice to then interview somebody from the other groups. Before they conducted the interview, they were asked if they wanted to be video-tape and tape-record which offered the chance to have a look at the interviews and discuss young people's experiences, occurring problems and questions together, at the end of the session. In addition, each participant had the opportunity to take over the role of the interviewer, the interviewee and the camera-man to gain a more complex experience of the interview process and see the interview situation from different perspectives so that they would become more sensitive for future interview situations. At the end of the sessions, we discussed how we could improve our interview technique through the analysis of the video-recorded interviews.

The training session aimed to give young people more control over the research process and to provide them with additional skills to express their feelings, thoughts and concerns. It thus indirectly helped to address key aims of the thesis such as: examining young people's understanding, experiences and meaning of space and to get a deeper insight into the power-relations that characterise their everyday lives. That this training was open to all participants and thus included female and male participants further allowed me to minimize inequalities with regard to the familiarity with using the interview equipment,

video and photo camera and laptop right from the beginning. In the training I often had to encourage girls more than boys to try the equipment out and to take on responsibility for handling, for example, the video camera (see Schäfer & Yarwood 2008). However, it meant that the way this equipment was used in the further research project was very balanced, as participants shared a similar level of knowledge and experience. This was seen as one way to address and hopefully minimise possible power-inequalities amongst boys and girls and to challenge more traditional gender specific working and/or communication patterns.

4.3.4. Focus group discussions

I used focus group discussions as the core method of data collection for my research project. Focus group discussions give an insight into the interactions between participants and thus “capture the inherently interactive and communicative nature of social action and social meanings, in ways that are inaccessible to research methods that take the individual as their basic unit of analysis” (Tonkiss 2004: 198). Focus group discussions highlight the power relations people are engaged with as they operate within a social network (Barbour and Kitzinger 1999). In addition, the contributions of the participants are articulated and negotiated within the context in which they are growing up which means that it gives an insight into the broader power relations that characterise young people’s rural lives in the research area and thus addresses one of the main aims of the thesis: to uncover the multiple-power relations that characterise these young people’s everyday lives. It has to be pointed out that focus group discussions and peer-led focus groups in particular also helped to

get an insight into the multiple power-relations amongst young people. As discussed in Chapter 3 such relationships might play an important role with regard to young people's use and experience of space but have mainly been neglected in previous research.

It is generally argued that "boys and girls should be interviewed separately as they have such different communication styles" (Scott 2007: 111 see also Hennessy & Heary 2006). However, Pattman and Kehily (2004) found that boys were less patronizing in mixed groups than in single sex groups. They concluded that "mixed gender interviews may encourage girls to respond to the boys in ways that challenge the 'oppressive' constructions" (Pattman & Kehily 2004:140) of gender specific images. The use of mixed gender focus groups was thus seen in my own research as a way to build up a participatory relationship between the interviewer and the interviewees, as well as between interviewees, as focus groups are "distinctive in allowing participants to work through and re-define key research concepts and questions in an interactive way" (Tonkiss 2004: 203).

Furthermore, focus group discussions support the aim to place the control of this interaction in the hands of the participants rather than the researcher. They thus enable participants to take over an active role in the research process in generating "their own questions, frames and concepts and to pursue their own priorities on their own terms, in their own vocabulary" (Barbour & Kitzinger 1999: 5). Focus group discussions thus represent a method that challenges the problematic power-relation between the adult-researcher and the young-researched in creating a less hierarchical relationship that allows young people to feel more comfortable (Tonkiss 2004). This method

thus supported the aim to create a participatory research project *with* rather than just *on* young people.

4.3.4.1 Thematic foci in group discussions

My aim was to have at least three focus group discussions with each group which would build the core data for the research project. The group discussions took place between 1pm and 4pm after students had finished their school lessons and lasted between 30 minutes and 2.5 hours depending on the departure times of the few (school-) buses, the school restrictions of using classrooms, and young people's interest and time. The groups were all mixed sex and consisted of five to eleven participants (mean=7). The sessions were typically held within schools, however, no supervisory school staff was present at any of the focus groups.

In agreement with participants the sessions were audio and video-taped so that the discussions could be transcribed afterwards. I developed a thematic guideline for all three sessions allowing additional questions to be asked and topics to be included at any point. This supported the aim to remain as flexible as possible to react on young people's wishes, needs, abilities and interests. At the same time, however, it allowed me to follow several key topics throughout the work with all groups which enabled me to have a rough but comparable guideline of topics that combine all conducted focus groups and allow a comparison between them. Table 4.8 gives an overview of the key topics which were addressed in the focus group discussions. It further indicates how the different topics address the dimension of negotiations (Panelli 2002) as discussed in Chapter 3.

Focus group discussion	Thematic focus	Additional issues
<i>Focus group I</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group structure (friendship relations within the group and so on) (negotiation of social relations) Individual friendship relations (description of friendship networks, meeting places, activities with friends) (negotiation of social relations) Interests and hobbies (negotiation of rural space) Use of public and private places (negotiation of rural space) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental maps Preparation of next focus group discussion (issues that need to be discussed, specific interests, getting involved as interviewers?)
<i>Focus group II</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relation between young people and adult community members (experiences of inclusion, exclusion. Participation in decision-making processes) (negotiation of social relations and political arenas) Understanding of own position within the community (negotiation of social relations) How did they perceive their own choices and restrictions? (negotiation of social relations, negotiation of rural work) Migration plans and motives (includes negotiation of rural work) Young people's understanding of rurality and spatial disadvantages (includes negotiation of rural knowledge and of rural work) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some young people took over as interviewers (I would leave the room during that time)
<i>Focus group III</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss topics that were important to the group in more depth Discuss: young people's understanding of rural-urban differences (negotiation of rural knowledge) Young people's understanding of growing up in East Germany and the relation between East and West Germans (negotiation of rural knowledge including dimensions that go beyond the rural) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project planning, setting up more focus group discussions if young people wanted to.

Table 4.8: Key topics of focus group discussions

(Source: Author)

In addition, students were encouraged to take over the role of the interviewer themselves from the first group discussion onwards. Several young people chose and prepared topics for sessions which meant that they took over the role of the researcher (I waited outside of the classroom until they finished their discussions). These peer-led focus groups lasted between 5 and 40 minutes and covered a wide range of topics ranging from discussing the pros and cons of downloading their favorite music up to personal experiences with parents fighting or divorces, aims and fears in regard to their own future lives. Two 14 year old girls from the Gymnasium even prepared an information session for their peers to give them advice with regard to future careers. They had collected a wide range of information material prior the meeting and went through their information material with their peers to find appropriate information regarding their individual interests.

4.3.4.2 Mental Maps

In the first focus group discussions I asked participants to draw their own mental maps about places and spaces that were important with regard to their everyday lives. Showing the relation between the individual and its environment, mental maps are seen as fundamentally important for geographers in understanding how place is constructed and how people act within and perceive specific places and spaces. The underlying assumption is that everybody uses mental representations or images to orientate themselves in a very complex world. Mental maps are in this sense defined as summarizing "each individual's knowledge of their surrounding in a way that is useful to them and the type of relationship they have with their environment" (Holloway & Hubbard 2001: 48). Kevin Lynch (1960) was the first using mental mapping as a research

technique. Since the early 1980s mental maps have been incorporated in a number of studies on children's environmental experiences to analyse children's cognitive ability and the development of their spatial awareness. In this context, Matthews' work (see Matthews 1981, 1984a, 1984b; Matthews et al. 1998) became particularly influential analysing children's awareness of place and their abilities to represent spatial dimensions. Matthews (1984a) showed that young people's awareness of places is influenced, for example, by gender and age which has an effect on their cognitive development and thus indicates inequalities amongst young people.

The idea of using mental maps to capture people's spatial awareness has been critiqued for a number of reasons. The first, more general critique refers to the assumption that a two-dimensional drawing would capture the ways in which people make sense of the world (Golledge & Stimson 1997). It has been highlighted, that mental maps are always partial and simplified. Further, it has been pointed out, that some people might draw better than others due to their educational background (see Holloway & Hubbard 2001).

In addition, the new sociology of childhood which is connected with an increased interest in children and young people as social actors (James & Prout 1997; James, Jenks & Prout 1998) has initiated debates on using visual methods to enable children to gain more control in the research process and to find alternative ways of expressing themselves (Holloway & Valentine 2000). Reflecting on their research on and with Kampala street children, Young and Barrett (2001: 144) further highlight that "child-centred visual methods avoid the adultist assumptions of the cognitive school and facilitate research 'with children' rather than research 'about children'". The use of visual methods is further highly beneficial and appropriate in research with young people as they

offer an opportunity to include “all ages and both genders into a research process without discriminating between those with different abilities, confidence levels and educational attainments” (Young and Barrett 2001a: 151) and gives young people more control over the research process.

Geographical research on young people’s lives has thus started to use mental maps in combination with other research techniques. Rather than focusing on issues such as children’s cognitive abilities, these more recent studies use mental maps to better understand their experiences, perceptions and access to places and spaces. It means that young people’s drawings, as well as their explanation of the maps, are often understood as additional information which helps to get a deeper insight into their everyday lives. Following a more progressive understanding of place as described by Massey (1993, 2000 see Chapter 2), it can be argued that young people’s relationship with their environment also includes the dimension of social networks and places within and beyond the local environment.

Hörschelmann and Schäfer (2005), for example, used mental mapping to capture the ‘glocal’ dimension of young people’s every day lives. In their project on ‘Globalisation, cultural practice and youth identify in former East Germany’ participants (aged 9-18) were encouraged to draw maps that represented places and spaces that were of importance to them. This included spaces *within* and *beyond* young people’s actual environment. It meant that participants could also include places they would like to see or where they wanted to travel to or live in future. Geographical accuracy was thus less important and young people’s explanations of their mental maps were seen additional information to their descriptions in focus group discussions.

Aiming to develop a participatory research approach the incorporation of mental maps in my own research project was conducted similarly to the one applied by Hörschelmann and Schäfer (2005). This way of using mental mapping allowed not only to increase young people's participation in the project but also to offer them an additional way of expression and reflection on their own everyday lives through discussing the maps with their peers. The mental maps gave an insight into the spatial range of their everyday lives and highlighted young people's perception of places and spaces. Including young people's own reflection and interpretations on their mental maps was further seen as an essential aspect to minimise misinterpretation (see also Cornwall & Jewkes 1995; Young & Barrett 2001a, 2001b; Hörschelmann & Schäfer 2005).

The instructions given to participants were to take an A4 piece of paper and some drawing pens and take as much time as they needed to draw a map of places and spaces which were important to them and/or which played an important role in their daily lives. The students were told that the importance could be represented through the size of the objects while geographical accuracy was not seen as important. I planned a timeframe of 15 minutes for this exercise and asked students afterwards to return to the table and to introduce their mental maps to the rest of the group if they wanted to. This gave a better insight into the meaning of the mental maps while it contributed to a better knowledge and understanding between the participants within the group.

The maps were analysed in the context of young people's perception of the everyday spaces. They further provided a good insight into the multiple networks participants were engaged in within as well as beyond their local environment. The mental maps thus represented an appropriate way of capturing an understanding of space which "can be imagined as articulated

movements in networks of social relations and understandings" (Massey 1993:239). In addition, the maps often included references to places, spaces and dreams which were connected with participants' future lives. It highlights that spatial understandings "are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for the moment as the place itself" (Massey 1993: 239). Young people were asked for their permission to keep a copy of the original map and to use it for further analysis and publications.

4.3.5 Young people developing their own (research) project

I offered young people an opportunity to develop and conduct their own (research) project in providing the technical equipment needed, financial support for transport, cover the costs to develop photographs, provide material for collages, helping with organisational tasks and giving advice (see Hart 1992). Young people could further make use of the network of experts that I had established and decide in how far they wanted to be involved in the analysis and dissemination of the research project.

It was hoped to reach the highest level of participation at this stage of the research project and to enable young people to reflect on and address issues that are important to them. The most important was, however, that participants could *choose* what they wanted to do, even if this meant that the project would not lead to particular forms of action or engagement with the local community or local gatekeepers or would address issues that had not been focused on in the research process.

While two out of nine groups decided to carry on with focus group discussions to discuss further issues or specific topics of interest in more depth,

the majority of the groups wanted to develop their own research project on a topic of their choice. The projects young people developed varied immensely with regard to research topics and design (for an overview of the research projects young people developed and conducted please see attached table in the Appendix E). In the analysis I will keep referring to these projects as they highlight topics which participants identified as being of interest and/or concern and thus give an insight into participants' understanding of their everyday lives. These projects can be seen as supplementary to the data collected from the focus group discussions and address the aim of getting a deeper insight into young people's understanding, experience and perception of space. At the same time these projects represent a possible way of acknowledging young people's agency, helping them to develop further skills and giving them a voice.

4.4 Analysis and dissemination

Scholars increasingly argue for involving young people not only in the development, preparation and conduction of research project but also in the final stages of data-analysis of the material and the dissemination of the research results (see for example Chambers 1997; Pain 2003). This call refers back to the criticism that academics often retain overall control in research particularly with regard to the final stages of interpreting and analysing the data (Pain and Francis 2003). This, however, means that "the choice of which data to include and the interpretation of the data is in the power of the adult researcher" (Punch 2002b: 329). Only a few studies have realised this aim of including young people into the analysis of the research results up to now (see Pain and Francis 2003; Kellett et al. 2004).

To follow this aim I offered young people the chance to reflect on primarily findings at different stages of the research. One way of reflection was facilitated, for example, in giving summaries of what we had discussed the previous week so that I could get a feedback if these summaries represented their general ideas and if I had understood their arguments or comments correctly or if there was something they wanted to add to it. Particularly with regard to their self-designed and created projects participants further had to decide how their final product should be disseminated. Participants were often very keen on presenting the outcome of these projects to a wider audience which is why participants and I organised an exhibition which was called "Young people's live worlds in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern". This exhibition was shown in participating schools and at the county council in Röbel (Landratsamt Röbel: 15th February until 4th March 2005). In addition I was invited to present preliminary findings of the project at a conference for youth workers in Magdeburg in February 2005 (Starterkonferenz Caminante-network) where we exhibited parts of the projects as well.

Two of the interview projects conducted by participants addressed young people's reflections on local elections in 2004 in another East German Bundesland and the success of right wing parties which had taken place at the time of the research. Participants transcribed the interviews they conducted and added their own critical reflection on the topic. This was then put together as a booklet. Camino, an institution which offers educational and support services for young people added a comment for addressing and dealing with the issue of right wing radicalism in schools and further sponsored the print of 40 colour print brochures of this compilation which participants then distributed amongst

the participating schools as teaching material¹³. Later, Camino published a preliminary report of research findings from my research project on their webpage (Schäfer 2005b).

In addition to these self developed research projects and their dissemination within the region it also became clear in the focus group discussions that preparing them for the job market represented one of young people's key concerns. Participants were further interested in topics such as sexual health and the issue of right wing radicalism. We thus decided to organise a one-day workshop for all participants that included a number of workshop-sessions to choose from (training to prepare for a job interview, sessions on sexual health and how to deal with right radicalism in their everyday lives). In addition to the topics mentioned above, it was planned to organise a meeting between young people and local experts who are engaged in making decisions of behalf of young people (such as mayors and representatives from the city council) to discuss the possibilities and limitations of developing a youth friendly environment within the region. Young people were involved in planning this workshop which was held on 29th November 2004 in one of the participating schools. The city council provided transport for all participants and all experts invited (such as representatives from the city council, from several youth services, representatives from a big insurance company that offered free job training and so on) offered their participation or the conduct of one of the workshops free of charge. All together, around 65 young people and 20 adults took part in the workshop where the research projects of each group were exhibited. This one-day event enabled participants to meet up with young people from other schools who had participated in the

¹³ Although I asked teachers for their comments on the brochure and their feedback of using it as teaching material I did not get any reply.

project and exchange their experiences of participation as well as the outcome of their projects with those peers. It further facilitated a vivid exchange between young people and adult gate-keepers. The workshop was solely the outcome of young people's interest and engagement and demonstrates that young people's interests and motivations heavily influenced the research design.

In addition to young people's reflection on primarily findings or summaries of focus group discussions the transcripts of all discussions were analysed in accordance to the grounded theory approach in the broader sense (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss & Corbin 1998). It means that although I had developed clear areas of analysis prior collecting the data (such as the dimensions of negotiations as discussed by Panelli 2002) I was aiming for deriving the main topics and themes from the data itself. The coding process was thus understood as a key process to generate theory from the data (see also Bryman 2004). I followed the three stages of coding as described by Strauss and Corbin (1998) who distinguish between 'open', 'axial' and 'selective' coding. While the first two step of open and axial coding were done by hand on the print outs of the interview transcripts the final step of selective coding was done with the help of NUD*IST qualitative analysis software (N6) (see examples of selective coding Appendix F).

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how the aim of facilitating and thus developing a participatory research project with, for and on young people has been approached. The multiple benefits of developing a participatory-oriented research approach have been identified which range from the scientific benefit

of getting a deeper insight into young people's life worlds to the societal benefits of practicing democratic communication skills as well which include beneficial personal outcomes for the participants. It has been argued that participation has to be understood as a process of shared decision-making and knowledge-production which is less dependent on the use of a particular method than on the methodological approach chosen. The participatory potential of research projects is thus highly dependent on the flexibility and openness of the research design so that young people's needs and wishes as well as their interests and abilities can be taken into account. I agree with the more recent call of children's geographers to address the 'politics of childhood' and to give young people a voice in addressing them as knowledge experts of their own life worlds and involving them into several if not all levels of the research project. This equips young people with skills that support critical thinking and therefore might increase their awareness of social inequalities as well as their abilities to challenge them. In this context I have argued that it is important to embed the research project in its local and regional context which was addressed in building up a network of experts who I engaged into discussions of young people's participation and their general position within the local communities. Furthermore, young people made use of this network at a later stage of the research project to realise their own projects and to discuss their own experiences of exclusion and concerns with adult gate-keeper who have direct influence on decisions that affect young people's lives.

In addition it could be shown how the different methods chosen helped to address the overall aims of the thesis. As argued in Chapter 2 and 3 it is necessary to uncover the multiple power relations that characterise young people's lives to get an insight into the heterogeneity of their experiences in

second modernity and the meaning of growing up in rural East Germany for young people's life experiences. Referring to Panelli's (2002) model of the dimension of negotiations it has been highlighted that the focus group discussions were seen as the main way of addressing these dimensions while, for example, the research projects carried out by participants were seen as providing additional contextual or more in-depth information.

Having established the methodology of the study, the following chapter will concentrate on the analysis of the data with regard to the overall aims and objectives of the project. The following three chapter focus on the in-depth analysis of the focus group discussion using the material produced in the research projects as additional data to get a deeper insight into young people's lives. The *first analysis chapter* (Chapter 5) starts to analyse the multiple power relations that characterise young people's geographies in the research area. Following Massey's understanding of space it will be focused on young people's perceptions and negotiation of 'rural knowledge' focusing on young people's perception of growing up rural. The chapter will then focus on young people's perception of their social position within their rural environment which addresses the dimension of social relations and political arenas. This includes young people's perception and experience of social inclusion and exclusion within the rural community and how it affects their use of rural spaces, as well as their relationships with adults and other groups of young people within their rural environment. This then thirdly leads to a focus on dimensions beyond the rural contexts such as the way young people position themselves in the East-West German context.

Chapter 6 focuses in more detail on the main dimension of disadvantage identified by participants: their restricted access to job training facilities and the

poor job opportunities within the region. It thus analyses the dimension of 'negotiating rural work' and how young people explain and experience these restricted opportunities and what kinds of strategies they develop to overcome them. It will be shown that young people's perception of their present day situation is still highly interlinked with their perception and understanding of post-socialist transformation process.

The final analysis chapter (Chapter 7) will then focus on how young people translated their everyday experiences into future plans and images. It became apparent in the analysis that these future images do not only mirror participant's perceptions and experiences but further has a direct impact on how they live their present lives. In addition it will be shown that participants developed very different ideas about their futures which were often dependent on their social backgrounds, age and gender.

CHAPTER 5

Young people's understanding of growing up rural and growing up in post-socialist Germany

5. Introduction

Aiming to understand how young people perceive and experience the meaning of growing up rural and growing up in a post-socialist area the participatory research approach foregrounded young people's understandings and voices. As discussed in Chapter 1 and 2 young people growing up in rural East-Germany are often referred to as the 'loser of reunification' referring to still existing socio-economic differences between East and West Germany which heavily impact on these young people's everyday lives. It has been argued, however, that such one-sided picture neglects to acknowledge young people's agency and fails to explain why some young people suffer or benefit more from new choices and risks than others. Although Beck and Giddens have acknowledged that individualisation processes might be uneven and that new structural inequalities might be (re)constructed in second modernity these theorists offer no framework to empirically explore these issues. While these authors highlight the importance of the local for globalisation processes they do not offer a conceptualisation of space which allows exploring such inequalities. I have thus argued that the meaning of space for (young) people's everyday lives in second modernity is not sufficiently addressed in their theoretical work. I have therefore introduced Massey's (1993, 2005) understanding of space, which foregrounds the multiple power relations that characterise participants' multiple

geographies and thus their everyday life experiences. This concept of space also allows taking power relations into account which go far beyond the local. Such understanding of space is particularly helpful to analyse, for example, whether and how transformation processes still impact on young people's lives in rural East Germany.

To analyse these multiple power relations empirically I have introduced Panelli's (2002) dimensions of negotiations that characterise young people's lives in rural areas. These dimensions are often highly interlinked with each other. To gain an insight into the complex geographies of young people in rural East Germany this chapter will firstly focus on young people's description of the advantages and/or disadvantages of 'growing up rural'. These understandings address what Panelli (ibid.) has called the negotiation of 'rural knowledge' and represent an important context within which young people develop their strategies to cope with or even overcome identified disadvantages. It thus also helps to address the aim of acknowledging young people's agency.

Following the call to pay more attention to young people's feelings of attachment and emotional well being which is often interlinked with their position within their communities (see Chapter 3), young people's experiences of inclusion and exclusion within their local community will then be analysed. This includes both power-relations between young people and adult community members as well as those among young people. This section thus focuses on the negotiations of socio-spatial relations and political areas (Panelli 2002). At the same time it will be analysed how these experiences impact on young people's negotiation of rural space.

Finally, it will be analysed in how far growing up in a post-socialist country affects young people's understanding of 'the rural'. This will give an

insight into participants' perception of the East-West German relationship and the post-socialist transformation process. This part of the analysis can be seen within the context of 'negotiating rural knowledge' foregrounding that rural knowledge is influenced by and influences power relations that go far beyond the local. It will be shown that young people often distinguished between the ways in which they – those who grew up in unified Germany – and their parents or grandparents – those, who had actually lived in the socialist GDR – are affected by the post-socialist transformation process. At the same time, however, participants referred to still existing differences between East and West Germans and often identified themselves as 'East Germans'. Further, East-West German differences were perceived as an important context of young people's everyday lives which in some aspects seemed to override rural-urban differences. This played an important role with regard to the strategies participants developed to challenge and overcome experienced disadvantages.

To analyse the ways in which young people negotiate power relations this chapter will focus on

5.1 Young people's perception of growing up rural

As argued in Chapter 3 it is important to understand young people's construction and meaning of 'rurality' which is strongly interlinked with normative perceptions of what it means to be a countryside 'girl' or 'boy'. It thus plays an important role with regard to their socio-spatial identity construction. Issues that are discussed here are not unique for the East German context. They are important, however, to get a clearer picture of the meaning of rurality in a post-socialist context. Clear similarities with young people's experiences in

other rural regions will emerge which will highlight similar experiences of rural youths more generally. However, I have argued that the analysis of the differences, similarities and interlinkages between participants' understandings of what it means to 'grow up rural' and/or to 'grow up in East Germany' can give valuable insights into the ways the post-socialist transformation process still impacts on their everyday lives (see Chapter 2).

I will now discuss the dimension of 'negotiating rural knowledge'. To get an insight into young people's understanding of 'growing up rural' it was important to analyse which aspects of their everyday experiences they identified as 'typical rural'. Such understandings play an important role with regard to young people's perception of and content with their present day life situation. In the following section I will thus discuss the dimensions young people identified as the 'advantages' of growing up in the Landkreis Müritz to then analyse young people's understanding of 'disadvantages' and the way they perceived themselves within the context of urban-rural differences or similarities.

5.1.1 The advantages of growing up rural

The focus group discussions as well as the self-conducted research projects revealed that participants identified specific aspects of their everyday lives as 'typically rural'. Particularly in comparison to life in urban areas participants highlighted the advantage of growing up in a more natural environment. They referred to the advantage of having a big garden and/or an allotment where they could spend their free time with their families and friends. In addition, participants often highlighted that there was less traffic in their towns and villages than in bigger cities which meant that it was quieter and less dangerous

and polluted. Comments such as the following were quite common among participants¹⁴:

Anika (RE10G3/50)ⁱ: [It is better to grow up] In the countryside because there is less noise. And you don't have a proper garden when you live in the city because there is a lack of space.

The 'rural advantage' of having better access to outdoor spaces was perceived as providing a better quality of life. Participants highlighted that it allowed them to be in a more natural environment and also to have pets and/or to do sports such as horse-riding as illustrated in the following quote:

Manuela (GY8G3/124)ⁱⁱ: Well, I don't want to leave [the countryside]! By no means. I mean I know that people claim that there are no jobs here but I - I mean I was born in Berlin but every time I go back there are cars everywhere. And I am mad about horses and cats - about animals in general and so I don't feel comfortable there.

That particularly younger participants highlighted advantages of growing up rural is also in line with other empirical research on young people's perception of their rural residency (see Matthews et al. 2000; Glendinning et al. 2003). It indicates that young people's age and gender had an impact on how they spend their free time and how they experience their rural environment.

Participants also referred to the familiarity of space which resulted for some participants in feelings of security. Melanie for example expressed this indirectly in referring to her fear of getting lost in a bigger city:

Melanie (GO10G2/1284)ⁱⁱⁱ: I would be really scared to get lost [in Berlin] when I am in one place and have to go somewhere else and then I lose my way taking the S-Bahn (suburban railway) ending up in Honolulu or so. No, I would be completely scared of getting lost and also being in such a big city without knowing anybody.

¹⁴ The names of the research participants have been changed in order to maintain anonymity and confidentiality. The pseudonyms used represent the gender of the participants. Information about the school they went to, the class, which group discussion and line in the transcript it refers to is added in brackets. All original quotations can be found in Appendix G.

Melanie thus valued the familiarity and manageability of the rural environment highly as it made her feel secure. In opposition to this, life in urban areas was perceived as anonymous, chaotic and untransparent. Although Melanie was the only participant that described urban living conditions in such a negative way the majority of young people shared the understanding that living in urban areas was connected with air pollution, noise and a high level of anonymity. In contrast to this participants described their own living conditions often as: safe, more healthy and quiet that was characterised by a high level of familiarity within the local community. These aspects correspond with the image of the 'rural idyll' indicating that participants shared - at least partly - the understanding of the countryside as a safer and healthier place to grow up in (see Chapter 3).

In the focus group discussions it became clear, however, that young people's everyday life experiences were often contradictory to this image. Particularly with regard to young people's access to and use of communal places participants experienced multiple restrictions and forms of exclusions within their rural environment. It means that the rural idyll represented only one dimension of young peoples' understanding of what growing up rural means.

5.1.2 The disadvantages of growing up rural

The results from the questionnaire indicated that young people were particularly dissatisfied with and/or concerned about local job and training opportunities. However, the analysis of the focus group discussion as well as young people's own research projects revealed that these issues were *not* perceived as specifically *rural* disadvantages. While it has to be questioned how young people explained these inequalities with regard to the dimension of 'rural work'

(see further discussion in Chapter 6) this section will firstly give an overview of the main dimensions that young people did identified as *rural* disadvantages:

- Lack of leisure, shopping and transport facilities
- Limited number of young people within the local environment
- Social pressure/control within the rural community

These disadvantages correspond with those identified by young people growing up in other rural regions in Europe (see Chapter 3). It highlights that young people in post-socialist Germany face very similar problems to their counterparts in other rural regions in Europe. To understand, however, which implication these disadvantages have on young people's everyday lives it is important to analyse which strategies they develop to cope with and even challenge and overcome them. Such strategies can be understood as an expression of young people's agency which has often been neglected in previous research (see Holloway & Valentine 2000). The following table (table 5.1) summarises the dimensions of disadvantages and the kind of strategies that participants developed as a response. Listening to their descriptions of their lives it also became apparent that gender, age and social class seemed to have an impact on how young people experienced these disadvantages and which strategies they developed. The table thus also includes an indication of which group of young people seemed to be most likely to develop specific strategies.

Disadvantages of growing up rural	Strategies to overcome experienced disadvantages	Strategies mainly developed by
Lack of shopping facilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Travel to other cities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> on their own with their parents Order via internet 	1a: Older, female participants 1b: Younger female participants 2: Females with higher educational background
Lack of leisure facilities	Travel to other places (driven by parents)	Those young people that could afford it financially and/or got the support from their parents
Poor transport facilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Cycling Getting driving licence Asking friends who can drive 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Gender specific: girls seemed more restricted Depending on financial resources Depending on type of friends and age (more likely for older students to have friends that drive already)
Limited number of peers at place of residency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use internet to build up friendships Pen-friends in other parts of the country 	1. & 2. Often students with higher educational background, mainly females
Social pressure and control	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Aiming to 'fit in' Considering out-migration 	1. & 2. Particularly highlighted by female participants
Gender specific job opportunities	Considering out-migration	Particularly highlighted by older female participants

Table 5.1: Disadvantages of growing up rural identified by participants
(Source: Author)

The results above indicate that participants' perceptions of disadvantages and of opportunities to overcome these varied immensely amongst them depending on their social background and/or the parental support they got. Participants from the lower or medium educational level, for example, referred more often than students from the highest educational level to financial and/or mobility restrictions which prevented them to join sports clubs. Participants who attended the Gymnasium, however, were more likely to be members in sports clubs, getting music lessons and so on and referred more often than other students to a high level of parental support.

This supports findings made by Fuhs (1996) who argues that it has become a norm for modern families that free time was spend in a meaningful and active way highlighting that fixed leisure activities were most common for young people from higher social background which gave them more opportunities to try out different things and build up a wide range of skills. In addition, Fuhs (1996) also compared leisure activities of East and West German youths and showed that leisure activities in West Germany were much more characterised by fixed appointments (including: membership in a club or society) than in the East (see also Krüger 1996; Rudolph 1997). This was due to the lack of club and society structures in post socialist East Germany indicating that young people growing up in this German part are still facing additional disadvantages.

Considering, however, that participating in institutional activities is connected with building up young people's 'cultural capital' through the development of additional skills and relationships (see Chapter 3) these inequalities might increase structural disadvantages amongst young people. Such inequalities also became apparent with regard to, for example, young people's access to and use of the internet. Some participants seemed to perceive using the internet to communicate with others and to develop friendship relations as an essential part of their everyday lives. This became particularly clear when a group of 16 year old students from the Gymnasium discussed typical leisure activities of youths within the region. These students argued that they did not go to the local youth club because they had 'better things to do':

Jakob (GY10G1/154)iv: [At the youth club] There are normally two [young people] playing Play Station and the rest sits around them.

NDS¹⁵: And what do you do if you don't go there?

Amelie: The normal youths sit at home in front of the computer and use the internet to communicate with other people.

Building up friendship relations via the internet can be described as one way of negotiating rural space and social relations beyond the rural environment (see Panelli 2002). It has to be highlighted, however, that none of the students from the Förderschule referred to this kind of use of the internet. As results from the questionnaire further indicate these students were less likely to have access to a computer. Even if they had access they used the computer and the internet much less frequent than higher educated students which reflects on different ways of using the internet (see also Laegran 2002). It means that chances to overcome local disadvantages were much more restricted for those young people (here: students from the Förderschule) who were already in a disadvantaged position.

In addition I want to draw attention to the issues of social control and gender specific job opportunities which were often highlighted by female participants. Considering that the research area suffers from high out-migration of young women in particular these experiences of exclusion need to be considered more carefully. Female participants referred in this context to gender specific expectations of local community members that did put girls and young women in a more disadvantaged position than their male counterparts. Antje, for example, expressed that traditional gender roles were still dominant in the region which restricted the chance for young women of finding a job locally (see also Chapter 6).

¹⁵ NDS are my initials and are used to indicate questions which I posed in the focus group discussions.

Antje (GO10G2/1391)v: But I think there are not many job opportunities for girls. I mean, well, if I was a boy, for example, then I would have become a mason or a road builder or a house-painter.

The need to meet specific expectations of community members often seemed to be experienced as restricting by female participants. This confirms finding from other empirical studies on young people's perceptions of well-being (Dahlstroem 1996; Little & Austin 1996; Valentine 1996; Hughes 1997; Little 2002; Glendinning et al. 2003; Little & Panelli 2003). It indicates that young people's experiences in rural East Germany are similarly affected by traditional gender differences as young people in other rural regions. Rather than referring to a persistence of socialist gender relations it thus supports findings of re-traditionalisation of traditional gender roles within the East German context (Dölling 2000; Klenner 2002; Schäfer 2005a).

Considering, however, that young people's migration plans are not only affected by socio-economic factors (see Chapter 3) and that the high out-migration rates of young women in particular have still not been explained sufficiently by previous research such experiences of exclusion and social pressure need to be taken into account to provide incentives for young people to stay within the local area. This is particularly important as female participants often highlighted that leaving the rural environment was perceived as the most obvious option to overcome such gender specific disadvantages.

5.1.3 Rural-urban: contrary or complementary dimensions?

It could be shown that young people identified a number of aspects of their everyday lives as typically rural. Participants also often referred to clear differences between rural and urban regions. However, the focus group

discussions revealed that young people perceived their local environment only partially as 'rural'. Nadja for example pointed out that Rechlin (2,232 inhabitants) was a proper town rather than a village:

Nadja (RE10G3/27)^{vi}: It's a town, actually. There is an Amt [equivalent to city council], a school and shopping facilities.

Anika (RE10G3/14)^{vii}: Yes, but we actually don't live 'in the country' any more. That would mean that we work the land and stuff like that. And that's nothing we do. That's why I wouldn't say that this is the case [that we live in the country].

Anika differentiated clearly between 'urban' and 'rural' equating the first with a modern way of living and the latter with 'farming'. She argued, however, that this understanding of 'rural life' did not apply to their living situation any more as only few families were still working in the agricultural sector.

Particularly with regard to access to new communication technologies and the level of education participants emphasised that they were not in a particularly disadvantaged position compared to their urban counterparts. It means that although participants identified specific aspects of their lives as 'typical rural' they often described their everyday experiences in the light of a modern 'urban' lifestyle. This corresponds with empirical findings from a study by Nairn et al. (2003) which highlights that young people's experiences of rural and urban environments are often contradictory and ambiguous.

Referring to young people's images of the rural, Rye (2006) further pointed out that young people's understanding of the countryside often combines aspects of both: the rural idyll and the image of the rural as dull. I want to take this one step further arguing that it can also include dimensions of urban lifestyles and conditions as shown above. This corresponds with findings by Matthews et al. (2000) who showed that rural young people often create

mini-urban spaces within their local environment. The reference to urban as well as to rural dimensions of young people's everyday lives thus seemed to be complementary rather than contradictory (see also Rye 2006). It could explain why young people rarely identified themselves as 'rural youth' although they identified 'rural' characteristics of their everyday lives.

In addition it became apparent that participants often seemed to perceive East-West German differences as being more important than rural-urban differences. This found its expression in descriptions such as the following:

Patrick (G10G2/1170)^{viii}: I do not think that they [young people growing up in East German cities] are better off than we are. I mean, they might have some more jobs available directly where they live. But if you want to have a good job, you have to go to West Germany.

Young people's experiences and perceptions of growing up in a rural East German region thus can neither be captured in the rural idyll or the rural as dull (see also MacCormack 2002; Nairn et al. 2003). Their understanding of 'growing up rural' was rather highly interlinked with their perception and experiences of differences between the eastern and western German part and referring to spatial differences that go far beyond the local context. It highlights the need to understand young people's life worlds from their own point of view and to uncover the multiple power relations which characterise their everyday lives. As Massey (1993: 239) highlights, these include power relations which are "constructed on far larger scale than what we happen to define for the moment as the place itself" (see also Chapter 2).

Listening to young people's descriptions of their everyday experiences it became further apparent that the rural disadvantages such as the lack of leisure facilities represented only *one* dimension that caused feelings of exclusion and disadvantage among young people. Particularly with regard to young people's

access to and use of places within the communities it became clear that they experienced multiple forms of exclusion which originated from their position in the community and their relation to other community members, both adults and peers.

To get a more complex picture of young people's everyday lives I will analyse their experiences of inclusion and exclusion within the local context in the following sections. It will be shown that the multiple power-relations that characterised young people's everyday lives had major implications on young people's use and experience of space and their feelings of wellbeing and of embeddedness within the rural community. Here, the dimensions of the negotiation of rural space and rural social relationships and political arenas are highly interwoven with each other. As already discussed in Chapter 3, however, these feelings of spatial belonging and attachment can play an important role with regard to young people's (future) out-migration plans.

5.2 Young people's experiences of exclusion and inclusion within the local community

Participants described multiple forms of inclusion and exclusion within the local environment which reflect on the dimension of the negotiation of social relations and political arenas. These experiences and perceptions revealed spaces of marginalisation as well as negotiation, contestation and rebellion referring to both structural forms of exclusion and young people's agency. Some spaces which young people referred to as inclusive, however, were the outcome of their negotiations with other community members and/or a reaction to experiences of exclusions. It means that young people developed multiple strategies to challenge and/or overcome forms of exclusion and to create their

own sense of space. A clear cut between experiences of inclusion and exclusion can therefore often not be made (see also Panelli 2002).

5.2.1. Experiences of exclusion within the rural community

Despite the general lack of facilities and services for young people within the region and their restricted mobility, respondents referred to a number of additional aspects that affected their use of space and their experiences of exclusion and marginalisation within the rural community. Those experiences were mainly centred on the following aspects:

- Having restricted access to or being excluded from existing places
- Lack of or limited support from adults/other community members to include young people

In the following these aspects will be analysed in more detail to highlight the multiple ways young people dealt with and responded to these forms of exclusion.

5.2.1.1. Restricted access to/ exclusion from places

Participants' perceptions of exclusion were not only caused by the lack of facilities but also by the lack of access or their exclusions from existing local spaces. That young people were surrounded by open spaces and fields, for example, did not automatically mean that they always had access to these spaces (see also Matthews et al. 2000). With regard to this, a group of 16 year olds described that they had started to build a tree-house nearby their village.

Unfortunately this tree – like many other in the area - was under wildlife protection so that they were told off for building the tree house by adult community members.

Young people also referred to the difficulties of gaining access to open spaces. Janine, for example, was living at a farm in a very remote area and highlighted that it was not easy for her to meet up with friends. There was no bus connection from her place of residence to other villages and towns in the afternoon. I asked her if it would not be possible to camp locally with friends at the weekends.

NDS: (PE10G1/400)ix: Are people sometimes coming to your place to visit you?

Janine: (hesitating) Sometimes.

NDS: Well, but then it could be perfect to camp there for a weekend or do things like that.

Stefan: Yes there is a field.

Janine: Yes, there is a field. But, well - probably. But one would need to discuss that with the landlord beforehand and you hardly see him. And if you see him he is somewhere out in the fields. That's not so easy.

In addition, participants found it sometimes difficult to approach adult gate keepers:

Thomas (GY10G2/326)x: I mean we have a football pitch here, but it is always locked. You can't just go there.

Markus: Well, you can go from the back; there is a hole in the fence.

NDS: But couldn't you address this with the mayor or so?

Thomas: Probably, but he doesn't live in our village, he lives somewhere else.

Young people's experiences of restricted or regulated access to places were not only limited to natural sites and outdoor spaces. A high number of young people also referred to the lack of privacy at home with regard to their own rooms. This found its expression in young people's descriptions that they were, for example, forbidden to lock their rooms as parents wanted to know

what they were doing and be able to enter the room at any time. Several young people also referred to the problem that they were allowed to paint or to put posters up in their room as it was still their parent's property as the following example illustrates:

Andre (GO10G2/450)^{xi}: It is practically not my room. It still belongs to my parents and that is why I am not allowed to do any changes. And I never got a key for my room to lock it. Neither my brother because my parents want us to be always available for them.

Participants thus often felt that they had only a restricted or no ownership of their own rooms. However, participants often developed multiple ways of contesting these experiences of exclusion. A number of participants highlighted, for example, that they had over-ruled the orders of one or both their parents with the support of another adult family member.

Anna (GY8G2/373)^{xii}: I am not allowed to put up posters. But my father was away for a weekend and that's when my mother and I did put the posters up together.

Such cooperation with an adult family member played an important role in the creation of spaces where young people felt home. Several participants also described that they escaped their parents' control through the creation of their own spaces in houses of nearby relatives. This ranged from using the shed in their grandparents' garden to the renovation of several rooms within the house of a relative that young people could use whenever they wanted to.

These alternative ways of creating their own spaces gives an insight into ways how young people expressed their agency as they developed strategies to overcome restrictions and forms of exclusions that were caused by adults. This is in line with findings by Holloway and Valentine (2000) who have highlighted young people's potential to form such alliances with adults. These findings

indicate that family bindings still played an important role in participants' everyday life. It contradicts Beck's and Giddens' general assumption that family bindings loose their meaning in second modernity (see Chapter 2) and highlights that living contexts have a strong impact on the way young people experience their lives.

5.2.1.2 Lack of support from adult community members

With regard to experiences of exclusion within the rural community young people referred to the lack of support from adult community members to make spaces accessible to them. A group of 16 year olds described, for example, that adults were making false promises instead of supporting them to create even very simple leisure facilities within the village.

NDS (PE10G1/290)^{xiii}: Is there anything where you would say: that's what we really need?

Amelie: Well, primarily there should be more for young people to do in our village. I mean, there is nothing to do really.

Stefan: We don't even have a proper football pitch.

NDS: Is it not possible to get a piece of land or something like that?

Stefan: But they [the grown-ups] don't do it. That was the plan, but that's what they are planning to do since four years now.

Young people were highly dependent on the support and decisions of adult community members. Without such support it was often difficult if not impossible for them to get access to spaces or create spaces for their own use. However, young people often found alternative ways to realise their aims. In this case, it resulted in an act of rebellion as young people decided to put pressure on adult community members to stick to their promises. They emphasised the need of a proper football pitch through (mis)using a space to play football that was of high value for the adults.

Stefan (PE10G1/299)^{xiv}: Well, we bought some goals and now we play at the square of the village under protest of some people because they are scared of their timbered houses.

While this demonstrates that young people used space occupation as an act of resistance against being neglected by adult community members it also needs to be highlighted that young people did run the risk to be excluded even more through these kind of actions as they could be interpreted by adults as deviant behaviour. This could even result in deepening the conflict between local adults and youth.

In the research process participants also identified a lack of knowledge about local opportunities to get involved in processes of decision making. They described that they rarely had the chance to talk to adult gate-keepers such as the mayors or politicians who made decisions that affected their everyday lives. Towards the end of the research project participants and I therefore decided to invite local mayors and representatives from the youth welfare office (Jugendamt) to discuss opportunities and limits of creating spaces for young people within the local context (see figure 5.1).



Figure 5.1: Discussing options to create spaces for young people within the rural community. Workshop, November 2004
(Source: Author)

The workshop discussions revealed the tensions and misunderstandings between adult gate keepers and young people. One mayor asked the participants of the project for example what they expected adults to do if they did not respond to the efforts of the community to include them and did not use spaces that were officially designed for them:

Mayor 2(workshop)_{xv}: Well, I would really like to know from young people what they actually expect?! I mean if they are not a member of a club, if they don't like reading, if they don't do anything meaningful with their friends what are they then expecting from adults, from communal politicians or their teachers? What do you actually want, what do you expect?

The way the mayor addressed young people implied a devaluation of young people's everyday activities such as meeting up and hanging out with friends. From the mayor's point of view, such activities did not represent 'meaningful activities'. This understanding corresponds with results from Panelli and her colleagues (2002) who showed that activities such as hanging out with friends were highly valued by young people but often devaluated by adult community members (see also Matthews et al. 1998). However, 'hanging out with friends' represents an important socio-spatial process for young people (Nairn et al. 2003).

The problems and tensions such misconceptions or misunderstandings could cause for participants' everyday lives became clear in the focus group discussions. A group of 16 year olds described that their use of the bus stop had been perceived as a major disturbance by the local mayor and led to the demolition of this meeting place:

Amelie (PE10G1/182)_{xvi}: It [the bus stop] was knocked down.

Stefan: We were too loud and then they knocked it down.

NDS: You were too loud?

Stefan: Yes.

NDS: What did you do to be too loud at a bus stop?

Stefan: Well, when some are drunk...

Amelie: It annoyed the mayor. And the mayor was voted out of office so he quickly knocked the bus stop down before that.

NDS: And what is there now?

Amelie: Nothing. For now we sit at the village square or at the village pond.

Participants perceived the act of demolishing the bus stop as an expression of the community that their daily congregation was not welcomed and explained it with a general lack of understanding between adults and youths:

Natalie (PE10G1/1082) xvii: Adults tend to forget that they have been children and young people themselves once and that they did the same bullshit as us, sometimes even worse if I think about the stories my mum had told me.

This lack of understanding caused feelings of exclusion for young people within the local community. Young people also identified the lack of structural forms of inclusion in decision making processes. Jakob, for example, highlighted that formal ways of involvement were needed so that young people would get a say in their communities.

NDS (GY10G2/340)xviii: Do you feel like having a person to contact? Or what needs to be done so that young people have more of a say?

Jakob: It should be like in school. We should have a youth representative who then goes to the mayor and discusses the issues.

These experiences and feelings of exclusion, of lacking support from adult community members are not unique to young people's lives in rural East Germany. It has to be considered, however, that these regions are characterised by high outmigration rates of young people in particular which reinforces rather than reduces the differences between East and West Germany (see Chapter 1). To match political initiatives and to be able to offer young people an option to stay or to leave their region, these issues of exclusion within

the local community need to be taken into account as they play an important role with regard to young people's feeling of spatial attachment. This will be all the more important for the future of rural East German regions as financial resources and thus access to services and institutions for young people will decrease even further.

5.2.2 Experiences of inclusion within the rural community

Particularly with regard to the importance of experiences of participation and inclusion within the local context for young people's development of socio-spatial attachment and their understanding of well being, the following sections aim to analyse the multiple forms of inclusions participants referred to that characterised their everyday lives. In addition to the experiences of inclusion which young people gained from cooperating with adults to overcome domination and restrictions set by (other) adults as described in the previous section, young people also referred to experiences of inclusion with regard to the following aspects:

- Inclusion through positive social relations within the community
- Inclusion connected with specific sites and spaces. These were described as:
 - Spaces of inclusion initiated by adult community members/ structural forms of inclusion
 - Spaces of inclusion as an outcome of a silent agreement with adult community members (allowing young people to create their own sense of participation)

These aspects will be analysed in more detail in the following sections. I want to highlight that I use the term 'community' with regard to Liepin's (2000) definition as a fluid and negotiated phenomenon which includes people, meanings, practices and spaces. Such understanding emphasises the meaning of social formations of power relations and helps to explore the rural through the notion of 'community'.

5.2.2.1 Feelings of inclusion related to social relations within the community

As already shown with regard to the alternative ways of creating their own spaces, family members who were living close by often played an important role in negotiating rural spaces. Being able to rely on such networks represented a source of support and resulted in feelings of inclusion. For the majority of participants it meant that grandparents, uncles and aunts as well as cousins, nieces and nephews were living down the road or in walking distance.

That young people also perceived these close relationships as beneficial with regard to their own future plans became clear in a number of situations where participants expressed their wish to live with a close family member one day.

Janine (GY8G2/204)^{xix}: Well, I would be very happy if I could live with my aunt because I get on with her very well, much better than with my parents. She has also already said that she will furbish up the attic for me. I will be able to move in there what I really like as I love to be with my cousins and my aunt.

With regard to feelings of inclusion, a small number of young people also referred to the school as a place of inclusion. This was often connected with the feeling of being taken seriously by teachers and teachers showing interests in

their students' lives. Robert, for example, described that he found it really important and rewarding that his former school acknowledged the sport success he had outside of school through commenting on it positively within the school context.

Robert (RE10G1/571)_{xx}: When my name appears in the newspaper [due to receiving an award for sport-achievements] or so then some of my teachers approached me about it.

Nadja: Yes, that happened to me as well.

Robert: And then they congratulated me and did an announcement in school. I really liked it because it is nice to get positive feedback. It shows that teachers are interested what students make something out of their lives.

Some participants expressed similar experiences although it was more common that young people referred to a lack of support and positive relationships with their teachers. It indicates that there might be potential within the school context to develop more supportive and inclusive relationships between teachers and students.

5.2.2.2 Spaces given to or created for young people within the local community

Young people referred to a number of sites and places that they liked and which they comfortably made use of. Some of these spaces were particularly designed for them by adult community members or 'given to young people' in the sense that they were allowed – more or less freely – to make use of these spaces. While participants mentioned these places in the focus group discussions the importance of such places for their everyday lives became particularly clear in the projects which they designed and conducted subsequently.

A group of young people, for example, highlighted the importance of a specific space in school which had been created for the students (see Figure 5.2). They referred to a *Schülerklub* (students-club) which was run by the school's social worker and gave young people the opportunity to hang out and meet friends for playing snooker, cards, and table tennis and so on before school and during school breaks. A group of 14 year olds described this club as one of their favourite places to meet and hang out during the day:

Source: Röbel, Die Jugend in Ost und West, 1997, 100. Interview mit einem Schüler der Jugendclubs

Der Schülerklub:

Da gibt es leckere Sandwiches und Getränke. Meistens sind wir in der großen Pause dort, zwischen der 6. und 7. Schulstunde oder nach der Schule. Wir treffen dort Freunde und spielen Billard, Tischtennis, Tischfußball etc. Auch Hausaufgaben machen wir dort. Dort kann man sich gut beschäftigen, wenn man eine Freistunde hat. Ohne den Club wüssten wir nicht, wo wir in einer Freistunde hingehen sollten, außerdem wäre es langweilig.



The students-club (GO8project)xxi: You can get really good sandwiches and drinks there. We go there most of the time for our lunch break or after school. We meet friends there and play pool, table tennis, and table soccer and stuff like that. We also do our homework there. You have a lot of things to do in case you have a free period in between lessons. We wouldn't know where to go during these breaks without the club. It would also be really boring.

Figure 5.2: Young people's photo guide: The students-club
(Source: Excerpt from the photo guide produced by young people from Röbel.)

Other situations where young people felt included were when they had been given spaces for their own use. A group of 16 years olds described in this context a youth club in one of the neighbour-villages which they really liked.

They highlighted, that this club was very special because it was led by young people. Participants felt that they thus had much more freedom in this youth club than in other places:

Doreen (GO10G1/1159)^{xxii}: In [name of a nearby village] there is no adult managing it [the youth club] any more. I mean, some youths are already 22 years old and the youngest are around 14 years. But there is no one watching over them. They get the key from the mayor and sometimes somebody comes around to check if everything is fine. But it works out really well. I like to go there.

Other participants reported similar experiences. One group, for example, had been given an old caravan from the local community for their own use and had put a lot of effort into it. They had developed a strong feeling of space-ownership as they had turned the caravan into their own place through redecorating and fixing it. Young people thus enjoyed the freedom to create their own space which included that they did invest their own money in the caravan. They felt that they were responsible for it. At the same time, these participants highlighted, that it gave them the rights to decide how to make use of this space (which could even include demolishing it).

5.2.2.3 Creating spaces

In addition to spaces that were provided for young people within the community or that young people were officially allowed to use, respondents also referred to the creation of their own places. This often meant that young people made use of infrequently used, unused or even abandoned community spaces in a way that made sense to them. Adult community members were often aware of young people using these spaces and tolerated it in form of a silent agreement.

This gave participants the freedom to use these places for their own purposes or even to make them their own through re-designing and decorating them. A group of 14 year old students from the Regionalschule described, for example, that they had created their own youth club in one of the washing rooms within their housing complex. They thus developed their own sense of space which matched their interests and needs.

Young people also occupied places which had been abandoned or not used by other community members. A group of 16 year olds from the Gymnasium, for example, had profited from an abandoned caravan which one of their friend's parents did not use any more.

Katharina (GO10G1/401)xxiii: Well, if the weather is good we go to the camping site. We have a caravan there.

NDS: Really? What do you mean: we have a caravan there. You and your family? Or you and your friends?

Katharina: No, with friends.

NDS: That's interesting. And how did you organise this?

Katharina: Well, originally it belonged to the parents of a friend of mine. But they got divorced and left it open. So we have furbished it up a bit.

NDS: And you can meet there whenever you want?

Katharina: Yes.

Young people thus got access to specific spaces through an unspoken agreement with adults. This example further highlights again that young people were actively taking part in processes of creating spaces for themselves within the local environment, often spending a lot of time, effort and even money into these projects.

In addition, participants also used public places to meet and hang out with their friends. They often referred to the bus stop as a central meeting point where they met up with other youths on a daily basis. Young people highlighted, that the bus stop was often placed centrally in the village allowing them to pass by several times a day. Further, it meant that they could see who arrived and

left the village or town allowing informal chats with a range of people. The following excerpt from a photographic tour through their town (see Figure 5.3) can be seen as representative for the ways young people made use of the bus stop.



The bus stop (GO8project)^{xxiv}: This is our favourite place in Röbel. The bus stop was rebuilt. After school we frequently go to buy a Döner and then we sit at the roofed bus stop. From there you can see when busses arrive, who gets on and off and sometimes you meet other friends. Some also just come to have a smoke. Most of the time we sit at the bus station although our bus leaves from the stop next to the spa. But there is more happening at the bus station.

Figure 5.3: Young people's photo guide: The bus stop

(Source: Excerpt out of the commented photo guide produced by young people from Röbel. Included with their permission)

The local bus stop thus often represented an important space for social interaction between local youths. They connected feelings of familiarity and comfort with this place as they came there to have a smoke, to meet, chat and eat.

It seemed that it was always well known in the villages and towns that young people used this public space to hang out with their peers. It could already been shown, however, that young people's use of public spaces was a highly sensitive topic in the communities and that it depended on the good-will of adult gatekeepers if young people could make use of such spaces (see example of bus stop demolition in the previous section). It meant that young people's use of open community spaces were highly unstable as their acceptance in these spaces was determined by adults.

Although young people's relations to adults represent one of the key dimensions that characterised their everyday lives, geographers have increasingly highlighted that relations between young people also have a major impact on their perception and use of space (see Matthews, Limb & Percy-Smith 1998; Tucker & Matthews 2001; Panelli 2002). This was confirmed in the focus group discussions revealing the importance of power relations amongst young people. In the following I will analyse these relations which had a major effect on young people's use and perception of space.

5.2.3 Power relations amongst young people

Participants' descriptions of their daily lives revealed that power relations among them had a major impact on the way they made use of, perceived and experienced their local space. This became particularly clear in the way participants spoke about their peers and other groups of young people within the area. In a focus group discussion a group of 16 year olds discussed, for example, the reasons why a social worker seemed to have difficulties finding young people to help redecorate an old house and thus developing their own

space within community. While this group of young people could only assume the reasons as they came from another village it is striking that they explained the lack of interest in such project through power relations amongst young people:

NDS (RE10G1/524)_{xxv}: The social worker says that there is nothing else for young people [in the village] but they still don't come to help her. Do you have an explanation for that?

Robert: Probably it is because the 'wrong ones' were there in the past.

Nadja: Yes, probably it is like it is here.

Robert: Well, here it is like this: I would not there [to the local youth club] on principle because I know who went there in the past. It was the 'wrong ones' and I don't want to go there. I would not want that they come back.

Participants thus indicated that specific groups of young people used specific spaces in the local community. This implied that access to such places needed to be negotiated amongst youths. It sometimes meant that young people avoided specific places because they knew other youth groups were meeting there. Some participants even reported that they avoided specific local and regional spaces because they feared or felt threatened by a specific group of young people (see also Matthews, Limb & Percy-Smith 1998; Elsley 2004). References to such feelings of fear in this project were mainly made with regard to groups of right radical youths (referred to as: 'Nazis' or 'Rechte'). A group of 14 year old participants discussed, for example, the frequent gathering of right wing extremists at petrol stations within the region:

Janine (GY8G2/707)_{xxvi}: I heard that it is particularly bad with right wing extremists in Dammbeck.

Silke: Yeah, Dammbeck is bad as well. They always meet there at the petrol station to buy schnapps and all this stuff. And they buy cigarettes there as well.

Angie: When I come back from my grandpa in the evenings and it is already dark then they all stand there, the skinheads and Nazis at the petrol station in Wittstock and get drunk.

In addition to regional meeting places of this specific group of youths participants also referred to local spaces that were occupied or used by skinheads. It became clear in the interviews that young people often tried to avoid such spaces.

Anja (GO10G1/733)^{xxvii}: They [the Nazis] are always in the Multiculti [local kebab shop] or the Eiche [local pub] which is closed now.

NDS: What was the Eiche? A pub, I guess?

Melanie: Yes, a pub. You could always find the Rechten in there.

Anja: And it was always scary to walk along there at night (...). They always drank loads and then they started beating each other up and throwing bottles. And when you walked along there on your own, then - no. Well I think it was pretty dangerous.

These forms of spatial arrangements, however, did not only restrict young people. Their knowledge about these spatial arrangements also allowed young people to find and create local niches and enabled them to strategically (re)act and to negotiate their access to and use of local spaces. Melanie, for example, who had highlighted that right wing extremist met in a specific pub and that it was dangerous to walk there on her own found a way of minimising the risk of getting involved:

Melanie (GO10G1/740)^{xxviii}: I never walked along there [the pub where right wing extremists met]. I always went to the other side of the street and I never passed it on my own.

Anja: Me neither.

This example demonstrates that young people found ways to resist the dominance of other young people. Participants further made use of this local knowledge in deciding who they wanted to hang out with. Tanja, for example highlighted that she did not like skate boarders and the type of girls that hang out with them. She thus decided to avoid typical meeting places of this group of young people:

Tanja (GY8G2/699)^{xxix}: Well, at the half-pipe you can find all these skaters and these trendy girls but I wouldn't want to go there because I don't like skaters and I can't stand these little girls. They are so cool and run around with their handbags, these Britney Spears listeners. And that is why I would never try to make or even talk to somebody there. I rather prefer to be on my own.

While the examples indicate that young people used local spaces differently with regard to their interests and lifestyles it also became clear that different age groups used local spaces differently. Amelie, for example, liked the local youth club but did not use the local youth club because her age group was not represented there:

Amelie (GY10G1/141)^{xxx}: Well, we have a youth club which is pretty cool. But on one side there are always the 13 year olds and on the other side the 28 year olds [that hang around there].

NDS: And where are you then?

Amelie: Well, we don't go there at all.

The impact of the dimension of age on young people's use of space also became apparent in the commented photo guide a group of 14 year olds developed during the research. This group of participants did capture the most important places for young people within their town and referred to places such as the sundial as typical meeting places for the local youths (see Figure 5.4). However, these 14 year olds pointed out that they themselves were not using this space as it was a well known meeting place for the older ones:



The sundial (GO8project) xxxi: The sundial is close to the youth club. It is a small sitting area where older youths meet. However, we don't go there.

Figure 5.4: Young people's photo guide: The sundial

(Source: Excerpt from the photo guide produced by young people from Röbel. Included with their permission)

This age-specific usage of local spaces was often common local knowledge among young people. This did not mean that these spatial arrangements were not negotiated or challenged. But they formed an important dimension with regard to young people's spatial perception equipping them with an understanding of the *geographies of youths* within their area.

Space thus played a very important role with regard to young people's identity construction as specific groups occupied or made use of specific spaces, which directly or indirectly restricted or excluded others. It confirms with research findings by Matthews, Limb and Percy-Smith (1998) who highlight that specific groups of young people are identified by their territory (see also Massey 1998; Robinson 2000). Young people used this knowledge about the local geographies of youth to (re)construct and establish or even to avoid spaces that were used by and thus associated with specific groups and lifestyles.

Participants' knowledge about the *geographies of youth* should thus be understood as an important resource to (re)create, negotiate and challenge existing power hierarchies amongst them. These 'local geographies of youth' represent a key aspect of what Matthews, Limb and Percy-Smith (1998: 193) have described as the 'spatial-temporal map of experience'. In line with findings by Nairn et al. (2003) and Panelli et al. (2002) these examples show that young people develop their own strategies to challenge, for example, a restricted use of space or to defend or even invade a space that is known to be used by another group of youths. Such strategies can be understood as an expression of young people's agency through which they constantly negotiate rural spaces (see Panelli 2002).

The participatory research approach helped to analyse such negotiations as it allowed participants to reflect on their own use of their local environment and to capture their experiences in, for example, a photographic guide through their local town. While, for example, age or gender specific usage of and access to places were often touched on in the focus group discussions it was often the small research project participants developed which gave a deeper insight into power-relations amongst youth. It indicates that deeper insights can be gained by involving young people in the research design and conduct.

While the previous sections have analysed participants' understanding of growing up rural the following sections will focus on their perceptions and experiences of growing up in a post-socialist country.

5.3 Growing up in the rural East: disadvantage – opportunity – or both?

Regarding young people's socio-spatial identity construction it became apparent that perceptions and experiences of East-West German differences and thus young people's East German residency had a major impact on young people's everyday lives. Young people on the one hand (re)produced popular stereotypes about persisting differences between East and West Germany as well as between East and West Germans. In this context, they often described themselves as 'East Germans'. At the same time, however, participants highlighted that the changes and uncertainties that were connected with reunification had very different implications for them and older (East German) generations like their parents and grandparents. Participants developed their own understanding of personal opportunities and restrictions. This had a major impact on the strategies they developed to overcome disadvantages, and, more importantly, their perception of personal chances, risks and limitations.

The following sections analyse participants' self-positioning in reunified Germany and highlight which conclusions they draw from these understandings and how it affected their present day lives. It will be shown that previous explanations, which link East German identity constructions to experiences of devaluation (see Meulemann 1998; Pollack & Pickel 1998; Pollack 2000) do not (sufficiently) cover young people's experiences and understandings and that we might need to rethink categories such as East and West German when referring to this first generation that have grown up in unified Germany.

5.3.1 Young people's self-positioning in a reunified Germany:

"Of course I am East German! I was born here!"

Like Sven (16 years old), the majority of participants described themselves as 'East German': *"Of course I am East German! I was born here!"*. But what did they connect with 'being East German' and how can such an identification be explained considering that these young people represented the first generation that was born at the time of reunification? Does it mean that their self-description of being East German is an expression of a distancing from the Western capitalist world? Could this then further be explained as the outcome of the transformation process reflecting East Germans experiences of not being socially accepted as discussed with regard to East Germans who were - at least partly – socialised in the GDR (see Meulemann 1998; Woderich 1999)? This would, indeed, strengthen the hypothesis that East German youths perceive themselves as the 'losers of reunification'.

The focus-group discussions revealed, however, that such explanations do not sufficiently reflect the multiple ways young people experience and make sense of the transformation processes. The following sections show that although young people referred to and (re)produced popular stereotypes that describe general differences between East and West Germans, they had their own way of translating them for their own life-situation.

5.3.2 Eastern restrictions – Western options

Research participants were between 14 and 16 years old which meant that they were born in the year of, or even up to two years after reunification. They thus represent the first generation growing up in the eastern part of

only the case for [the village she lives in] but for the whole region. It is different in West Germany, though.

The majority of participants identified economic disadvantages as the key reason for East-West German differences. It was surprising, however, that young people hardly drew any connection between this identified disadvantage and their *rural* residency although they identified other dimensions clearly as rural disadvantages (see Chapter 5). According to Robert (16), East-West German differences even became apparent in the way how jobs were accessed:

Robert (RE10G4/222)^{xxxiii}: I think the only way to get a job in East Germany is through connections. That is quite different in the West. Here, I have heard a lot of people saying: my father works there and now I got a job there too. That never happens in the West. There, you do your interview and then they choose the one who is best qualified for the job. And I prefer it that way.

Participants explained these differences not, for example, with the meaning of social networks within rural communities. They rather interpreted their daily life experiences within the framework of East-West German otherness even though they identified a clear rural-urban divide with regard to other dimensions of their everyday life experiences like the access to leisure time activities, as already elaborated previously in this chapter.

It means that young people perceived the lack of job opportunities as the result of their *East German* rather than their rural residency. It was understood as a spatial disadvantage that affected not only young people but rather *everybody* who was growing up and living in this disadvantaged part of the country. It indicates that young people perceived themselves rather as *living in a marginalised East German region* than as marginalised *rural citizens* or *marginalised (rural) youth*.

The analysis of young peoples' understanding of personal limits and chances further revealed that the reunification process was perceived as having created new chances and opportunities. Being asked which major changes had been connected with reunification of the two German states, participants often emphasised that their job opportunities had opened up.

NDS (GO8G2/1598)^{xxxiv}: What do you think has improved since reunification?

Dirk: Job situation.

NDS: Did it improve? Why do you think so?

Dirk: Well, one can do more than before.

Participants thus referred to *increased career opportunities* that were the outcome of reunification. Access to the West German job market was perceived as a chance to overcome regional disadvantages as job opportunities in East Germany were highly restricted.

Daniel (16) (G10Gxx): I think my chances here are very poor. But there are lots of jobs in West Germany.

Sandra (16): I would advise everybody to go to West Germany. The wages there are much higher and you have much better chances to find a job.

In accordance with this, Janine pointed out that young people now had far more opportunities than their parents as people's mobility was highly restricted in the GDR:

Janine (GO10G2/250)^{xxxv}: All in all we have lots of chances. If we want a good job, we can go to the West. Our parents couldn't do that.

It means that participants described the reunification process with regard to the new opportunities and chances that were connected with it. This indicates that participants rated their personal chances not just in relation to the local or regional but on a national if not international scale.

References to better living conditions and job opportunities in West Germany as indicated in table 5.2 were used by young people to highlight these new chances rather than to question or denounce East-West German inequalities. That means identifying socio-economic inequalities between the eastern and the western German part did not result in a call for political intervention or the need to challenge these disadvantages. Nor did it lead to a general feeling of marginalization or exclusion. Young people rather seemed to focus on opportunities and chances that had emerged beyond the rural/local context they were growing up in.

Identifying socio-economic disadvantages as East German and therefore as the disadvantage of a physically confined geographical area had major effects on young people's plans to leave or stay within the region. Being asked how they perceived the possibility to move to West Germany, young people often stressed that they saw it as an option to overcome their disadvantaged position.

NDS (G10G3/992): Do you actually feel that you are forced to go to the West?

Paul: Forced not, it is more that we want to go.

Anika: That we want to go!

Paul: Yeah, we want to go somewhere where we firstly find a secure job and secondly where we will have more money than here.

Sven (PE10G2/716)^{xxxvi}: What does that mean 'being forced'? No, I really want to leave and you know, to get a good job you have to be willing to give something up.

The majority of participants connected the idea of going to West Germany with a strong feeling of being able to realise their personal careers and life ambitions. The option of future migration was thus understood as an expression of *individual choice*:

Frederike (G8G4/289): I really want to go to the West; I think that I will have really good chances there.

Anna (GY8G4/289)^{xxxvii}: Well (laughing) I don't have any problem with it [the fact that West Germany is different] I even want to go there because I think that I will have better chances in that society and that I will find my own way. I mean, I find my own way here as well...

With regard to their future careers participants thus highlighted their options of moving to the West to build their own lives. It means that participants did not refer to themselves as the 'victims' or 'loser' of reunification. However, the focus group discussions revealed that young people's perceptions of East-West German differences were much more complex than this. It also included understandings of fundamental and persisting differences between East and West Germans. The following section analyses where such understandings originated from and how they affected young people's everyday lives.

5.3.3 A unified country? Egotistic West Germans – 'solidarische'¹⁶ East Germans

Although young people highlighted the new opportunities that West Germany offered them they at the same time referred to fundamental differences between East and West Germans that showed a clear preference for East German characteristics (Table 5.3).

¹⁶ This word cannot be easily translated as this adjective does not exist in English. It comes from the noun 'Solidarität' ('solidarity') and describes people who share a feeling of unity resulting from common interests, feelings or sympathies.

Germany that has *not* experienced living in the socialist GDR themselves. With regard to young people's socio-spatial identity construction it had therefore to be questioned how young people positioned them in the wider East-West German context, how they experience social disadvantages, and how this affected their present day lives.

In the first focus group discussions it became apparent that the strong distinction between East and West Germany represented an important context of participants every day life experiences. Young people referred to popular stereotypes which also characterise the public discourse on the dichotomous character of the East-West German relationship. The following table (5.2) gives an overview of the aspects participants identified as key differences between East and West Germany and between East and West Germans.

	Situation in East Germany	Situation in West Germany
Perception	Poor job situation	More jobs
	Lower salary	Higher salary
	Types of jobs restricted	Variety of jobs available
	Getting a job is dependent on connections	Getting a job is dependent on personal qualification

Table 5.2: Young people's perceptions of differences between East and West Germany
(Source: Author)

It became clear that participants perceived reunified Germany as still dominated by an East-West German divide. They characterised East Germany as being disadvantaged due to the poor and therewith highly restricted job opportunities and low salaries.

Anja (GY8G4/272)^{xxxii}: I think the disadvantage we have living on the countryside is that there are not enough jobs for us. I mean, this is not

	Typical for East Germans	Typical for West Germans
Perception	Modest and caring	Arrogant, big-headed and selfish
	Creative/innovative	Throw-away/consumer mentality
	Team-player	No team-player
		Patronizing attitude towards East Germans
		Poorly informed about East Germany (Geography)

Table 5.3: Young people’s perceptions of differences between East and West Germans (Source: Author)

Referring to popular stereotypes young people described East Germans very positively as being open, helpful, creative and sociable. In contrast to this, West Germans were characterised as egotistic, consumer-oriented and particularly arrogant towards East Germans. Young people referred to popular stereotypes, like the arrogance of West Germans, who are know-alls and often have a lot of money which ‘ruins their character’ (see also Schlottmann 2005).

Young people highlighted that this was not only their own, personal perception but that it was, for example, also apparent in the way West Germans presented themselves on TV:

*Nadine (Go8G2/1385xxxviii): The Wessis are always so arrogant.
 Irina: Mhm.
 Nadine: Well, you even see it on TV. For example when they do the news, they always come across as arrogant.*

How deep this perception of East-West differences was rooted became particularly clear in participants’ descriptions of their own experiences with West German young people. Nadine for example had to confess, that the West Germans she had met did not fit her image of the arrogant Wessi. However, this did not result in a revision of her prejudices against West Germans.

Nadine (GO8G2/1393)xxxix: Well, when we went on a trip with our class there were some [young people] from the West. I thought: oh my god, arrogant, but actually they were completely normal, just like us. But in

general the things you hear [about West Germans] – you just think: oh my god, help.

This quote demonstrates that the 'things you hear' about western Germans seemed to have a deep impact on young people's understanding of differences between East and West. Even though their personal experiences did not always confirm the negative image of the arrogant West German, it did not guarantee a more differentiated view or a reconciliation of this perception. It indicates that the discourse of fundamental differences between East and West Germans represented a dominant context young people were growing up in. Such differences seemed to be confirmed and reproduced particularly by the experiences and narrations of adults.

To understand how such images could co-exist with participants positive perceptions of western opportunities the following section will explore the multiple dimensions that affected young people's understanding of the East-West German relationship and their own positioning within this context.

5.3.4 East-West differences: a matter of heritage rather than personal experience

Young people highlighted that differences between East and West Germans still existed. Moreover, they referred to the persistence of the German-German divide.

Melanie (GO10G3/783)x1: ... it will always be like this between East and West.

Patrick: That can't be overcome.

NDS: Why not? What are these fundamental differences that can't be overcome?

Patrick: Well, everybody says it! That is, the wall did only fall in some heads. The rest still exists. The differences are just too big.

NDS: Can you name some? I mean we discussed the different salaries.

Patrick: Yeah, living standard is different as well. I think there are more general differences and I know a lot of people that distinguish East and West. You can't overcome that. I don't know.

Anja: In the past [times of the GDR] it [the differences] was burned in everybody, like in our parents. And when they talk about it now then they burn it in their own child and so on.

Melanie: Yeah, it is an endless circle.

Participants had problems giving reasons for the origin of such fundamental differences. Moreover, it became clear that they lacked a deeper understanding of the causes of the proclaimed 'East-West German otherness'. That 'everybody says it' (GO10G3/786) was often seen as sufficient proof to accept the East-West German divide as real and persistent.

Anja highlighted in this context that young people were growing up with this differentiation the same way their parents had grown up with the Wall. It means that the dichotomous relationship between the two German parts was perceived as 'naturally given'. The origin of the differences was located in a time when they were not even born.

NDS (GY8G4/292)^{xli}: Why do you actually talk about it [the situation in East and West Germany] as if they were two societies?

Manuela: I have explained it last time already: because I was educated like this.

Anna: Yes, me too.

NDS: That those two different worlds still exist?

Manuela: Yes.

...

Anna (GY8G4/298)^{xlii}: Well, my father educated me in the way that it is nothing bad, that they [West Germans] are just like this but that he has been educated differently. I don't know. They are just always on their own, peculiar and we are a team I would say.

Participants' description that the notion of West German 'otherness' represented a fundamental aspect of their socialisation indicated that their understanding of the East-West German relationship was not the outcome of their own personal experiences. Referring particularly to their parents and

grandparents participants argued that they had *inherited* a perception of West Germans as being very different. Some even argued that they had grown up in an atmosphere of clear antipathy against West Germans and the West. Manuela for example expressed that she would never move to the western part of the country.

Manuela (GY8G3/659)^{xliii}: I was reared in the sense that the West is bad. I don't want to go to the West.

However, being asked what they knew about the GDR and what life was like before reunification, young people knew surprisingly little about their parents' and grandparents' lives or their experiences of the reunification process. Participants found it hard to relate to the 'past' of their parents. This found its expression, for example, in Maja's attempt to describe how people experienced the collapse of the GDR:

Maja (PE10G2/402)^{xliv}: You have to imagine that suddenly the country you have been living in is gone and you can't go back. Everything changes over night. I think, that is terrible, I can't imagine how people must have felt.

It is significant, that Maja did not refer to her own parents' experiences. It seemed as if she talked about a historical incident that had happened somewhere else in the world and to which she had no relation whatsoever. This was explained by young people by the fact that they had never lived in the GDR themselves.

Anja (GO10G2/125)^{xlv}: Well, we do not know what it was like to live in the GDR. None of us knows. We haven't been there, so we can't tell.

Participants thus did not show evidence of any particular insider-knowledge about their families' past. This also found its expression in Sven's (16) reply to the question what he knew about the GDR. In his response he

referred to a popular German movie "The Tunnel"¹⁷ which he had seen on TV at the time of the research. This reference to a TV movie, rather than to private experiences of family members or friends, demonstrates that the GDR was often perceived as an unknown and somehow inaccessible world for young people.

5.3.5 Critical voices on proclaimed East-West German differences

Some participants, however, were not only (re)producing the dichotomous understanding of East-West German differences but reflected more critically on the proclaimed 'otherness' of West Germans. This became clear in a focus group discussion with students from the Gymnasium where the expressed antipathy of one girl was challenged by one of her peers.

NDS (GY8G3/663)xlvi: But why is the West so awful?

Manuela: I don't know, I really don't know. I have just been brought up like this.

Tanja: Well, my father can't stand the gays either and I think they are cute. I mean, I don't always conform to what my parents think.

Tanja emphasised that young people were able to draw their own conclusions and opinions about other people. Highlighting that her father also had prejudices against other groups of people she indirectly questioned the authority of parental judgement.

Other participants similarly criticised adults who were creating a one-sided and very negative picture of West Germans. Martin, for example,

¹⁷ This movie was released in 2001 and dealt with the attempt to dig a tunnel between East and West Berlin to free some East German families and help them escape to the West.

explained that he always gets angry when people give an over-generalised picture of West Germans.

Martin (RE10G3/170)xlvi: I am hopping mad sometimes when a teacher starts to mock the Wessis. But when you have been out with a Wessi all day and he is actually not any different than an Ossi, then you are actually in the position to say something against it when the teacher claims that the Wessis steal everything from us ... like the Wessis steal land from the Ossis.

It is important to note, however, that Martin's father was West German. Martin thus had a very personal reason and experiences to question the dichotomous understanding of the East-West German relationship and the negative connoted image of the greedy West German who 'steals everything' from the East Germans. Martin perceived it as his right to question the authority of his teachers on this topic as he was actually living with close family members from the 'other part of the country'.

It has to be highlighted, however, that only few participants expressed such criticism. Those who did often had close relatives living in West Germany and went there frequently to visit them. They had frequent contact as well as personal relations with West Germans. It indicates that young people who were lacking such personal connections were more likely to (re)produce the dichotomous perception of East and West Germans.

Some more participants expressed their unease about the stereotypes connected with East German youth. Although right wing radicalism was not one of the main topics in the focus group discussions two out of nine groups wanted to address the issue in their self-developed research projects. Young people expressed that they felt that East German youth was all too often presented in the media as fascistic and xenophobic and they wanted to challenge this one-sided image by conducting interview projects with peers (see Appendix E). It

indicates that young people felt that the East-West German stereotypes could have a negative impact on them and that they were looking for ways how to challenge such perceptions. The project was seen as one way of being giving a voice and to actively challenge the discourse on the East German otherness. The final projects were printed as brochures and students wanted them to be distributed amongst all participating schools as teaching material (see also Chapter 4). It indicates that the participatory approach helped to getting young people's voices heard and that participants showed a high interest to make use of this opportunity.

5.3.6 Who benefits and who struggles? Young peoples' understanding of the impact of growing up in East Germany

The majority of participants highlighted that socialist experiences and values still had a major impact on their parents' present-day life. It indicates that people's experiences in post-socialist countries are often still shaped by norms and values which were developed in the socialist past (see Chapter 2). At the same time participants argued, however, that the transformation process affected them differently than the older generations, as they had actually not experienced living in a socialist country themselves. The differentiation between those who grew up under socialism such as their parents and grandparents and those who were born into a unified country like themselves became particularly clear in Anna's description of the differences between her own and her father's present day life:

Anna (15): My father always says that he could not survive in the West as he grew up in a completely different world. So he has to stay here. He taught me that the West Germans are different but that it is not their fault, really, and they are not really bad. They are just different. My dad

believes that I will do fine there and I think so too. I really want to go there to find a good job and I know I won't have any problems there at all; it is just that my father is too old now to live there.

Anna made a clear distinction between her father's and her own (future) life. The East, according to Anna's explanation, still offered a safe place for her father to live while the West represented the world of 'capitalism' which he was not used to and within which he could not survive. This understanding implied that not only different values and attitudes were connected with growing up in a socialist and capitalist country but that the Eastern and Western German parts were still divided along this line and that different skills were needed to survive in each part of the country.

From this point of view people who were socialised in the GDR were often perceived by participants as facing more problems with the transformation process than the younger generation, because it seemed nearly impossible for them to build a bridge between their socialist upbringing and capitalism. Young people described the older generations often as being trapped spatially in the East German part unable to survive in the capitalist West. It became clear in the focus group discussions, that young people often understood socialism as 'the past' whilst the West was perceived as 'the future', offering new opportunities of a capitalist world. For Anna, it was clear that she had to physically move and thus leave her father as well as East Germany behind to be able to build her own life in reunified (Western) Germany. East Germany was from this point of view perceived as a good place to spend their holidays (see Tanja, GY8G3/629) or to return to after retirement (see Robert, RE10G4/210) rather than a place for young people to live and build up their careers.

Anna's quote brings to the point what the majority of participants repeatedly highlighted during the focus group discussions: that reunification had opened new opportunities and chances. These chances, however, were mainly open for the *young generation*. East Germany was perceived as a place of stagnation which offered young people only very limited opportunities for their future lives, as it was still closely linked with its socialist past. This was explained on the one hand with the poor socio-economic situation, an outcome of the collapse of the socialist system and the transformation process. On the other hand, it was strengthened by young people's perception that the older generations were often unable or unwilling to make use of the new opportunities, because they were still affected by their socialist upbringing. Even though there were differences amongst young people with regard to their willingness and wish to migrate to the West, the majority of participants shared this understanding. It indicates that the discourse on still existing East-West German differences did build an important part of young people's understanding of people's living conditions in unified Germany. It furthermore corresponded with the dominant public inner-German discourse on the still existent East German otherness as (re)produced in the media (see Hörschelmann 2001, 2002, 2007; Schlottmann 2005)

This understanding that *new chances had emerged with reunification but were spatially uneven distributed* explains why young people described their present day life chances often in such ambiguous way as discussed at the beginning of this Chapter. It is an expression of young peoples' understanding that new (western) options were perceived as already existent and thus, in general, available but not yet accessible because young people were still living in the East. Participants perceived themselves as presently, and thus

temporarily, excluded from such new opportunities. However, it seemed possible for participants to overcome this disadvantage through migration.

This understanding of new opportunities for the younger generations explains why participants expressed a lack of understanding for the way some parents' and other (East German) adults perceived the transformation process. In this context they described, for example, that a high number of adults called for the reconstruction of the Wall and thus for the revitalisation of the socialist state.

Melanie (GO10G3/657xlviii): Some people say they would really like to have the wall back. I really don't get that.

Participants generally explained this longing for former times as a reaction to the lack of security and stability which their parents' and grandparents' generations were experiencing.

Sebastian (RE10G3/228)xlix: "[My parents] always had work [in the GDR], which means they never had to worry because they had a job ... over here [today], however, it is the other way around. You are glad if you find a job at all"

It has to be highlighted that Sebastian contrasted living conditions in the socialist GDR with conditions 'over here'. While referring to the same geographical region he drew a clear line between the time before and after reunification. It indicates that participants could on the one hand understand why some of their parents wished to go back to the past. On the other hand, however, living conditions had drastically changed, making it impossible to 'go back'. They were living 'over here' now, in unified Germany. The wish of returning to socialist times was thus not shared by young people as the following discussion illustrates:

Claudia (RE10G3/232)i: Well, principally they just want the wall back, that is their opinion, but it's not mine.

NDS: That's the opinion of your parents?

Claudia: Yes.

Martin: Yes, but then they don't think about it properly. They might say: wall back! But when the wall comes back then there is no McDonalds, no Burger King, and no Coke.

Participants highlighted that the fall of the Wall had not only created the opportunity to access the western job-market but also western consumer cultures. The socialist state to which the older generations referred was characterised by an ideology which had demonised these influences and isolated its inhabitants (even physically) from the West. This was seen by participants as a major restriction of personal choices and chances. For them it was time to move on and to make use of the new opportunities that had emerged with reunification. From this point of view the aim to revitalise East German products or the desire to turn back time expressed by the older generation seemed inappropriate and undesirable.

Participants also complained about the role of the media, particularly TV programmes and newspapers, in reproducing stereotypes of nostalgic East Germans:

Peter (GO10G3/805)li: Oh well, the worst are the surveys if the wall should be rebuild. They do that nearly every year.

NDS: Do they?

Peter: Yes, if the Germans want the wall back.

Anika: Or these East Shows, that's bullshit as well.

Echoing this, Martin argued that he could not understand why the media were still reporting on the multiple differences between East and West Germans.

Martin (RE10G3/192)lii: Well, I don't have anything against Wessis personally. I mean, I don't get what all the fuss is about. Don't they [the

print-media] have anything else to write about so that they just use this topic again?

The media, according to participants, repeatedly discussed differences between East and West Germany and even played with and celebrated the nostalgia for the former socialist time. This was perceived, however, as a negative trend which reinforced differences between the two German parts. Miriam even described it as a “*societal agitation*” which played the two German parts off against each other (see Miriam GO8G2/1397). It means that participants, representing the young generation, had a very different understanding of the GDR and of chances and limitations that arose in connection with the transformation process than their parents. Participants further described that adults perceived the new opportunities which had emerged from reunification as unavailable to them and some participants sometimes even felt, that their parents blamed them for this as illustrated in the following comment:

Anna (GY8G3/705)liii: What I really don't like is when my parents tell me what a good life we have today and how bad their life was in the former east.

Tanja: Well, we didn't have any influence on when we were born.

Anna: Exactly, that's what I always tell them that it is not my fault, that I was born at the time [of reunification].

This feeling of being blamed for having more and better opportunities than their parents was perceived by participants as unjustified and unfair. Although only a small number of them referred to such parental responses it still indicates that young people as well as their parents shared the perception that the transformation process affected people very differently. It confirms with findings from more recent studies on people's lives in post-socialist countries which highlight the resistant and creative processes that are connected with the

transformation and thus warns against the naïve understanding that post-socialist transformations are a one way processes to capitalism (see Chapter 2).

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed young people's understanding of growing up in a rural, post socialist region to get a better insight into the complex power relations that characterise their geographies. Following Panelli's (2000) model of the different dimensions of negotiation it particularly focused on the negotiation of rural knowledge, social relationships and rural spaces. These dimensions help to capture the multiple power-relations which characterise young people's lives in rural East Germany. With regard to the dimension of 'rural knowledge' it could be shown that participants did partly understand their rural lives in the context of the 'rural idyll' defining their rural environment as a safe place to grow up in. This perception, however, was often affected by dimensions such as young people's age and gender indicating that they perceived and experienced their rural upbringing differently. It further became clear that the rural idyll represented only *one aspect* of participants' understanding and experience of growing up rural. At the same time, however, participants identified similar 'rural disadvantages' as their European counterparts which supports more recent research findings on the discrepancy between rural myth and reality (see Chapter 3).

It became further clear that participants referred to both rural and urban aspects of their everyday lives and supports findings by Matthews et al. (2000). I have thus argued that the dichotomous understanding of rural-urban differences does not sufficiently capture young people's perceptions and

experiences (see also Nairn et al. 2003). It refers to the necessity of developing a more 'progressive understanding of space' (Massey 1993, 2005) which includes networks of social relations and understandings that might go far beyond the local. In addition, these findings highlight that young people's lives in rural post-socialist regions are often affected by similar structural disadvantages than of those growing up in other rural western European regions. It thus supports the call to include young people who grow up in post-socialist contexts and thus outside of the (western) core (Pilkington 2004) in debates on globalisation processes and the conditions of second modernity.

Participants were not only aware of rural disadvantages but that they also found different ways to cope with or even challenge and overcome them. In addition they also referred to experiences of inclusion and forms of negotiations which indicate that rural spaces should not simply be understood as spaces of marginalisation (see also Panelli 2002). This became particularly clear with regard to the dimensions of negotiation social relations and rural spaces.

Focusing on young people's experiences of inclusion and exclusion within their local environment and thus the negotiation of social relations (including political arenas) and rural spaces it could further be shown that participant's perception of their rural environment was not only affected by the actual lack of services and facilities but was also strongly related to the way they were positioned within the local community. It supports more recent research on young people's migration motives (see Chapter 3) which have highlighted that socio-economic factors do not sufficiently explain young people's migration patterns. Participants perceived level of inclusion, for example, was often dependent on experiences of positive social relationships and how they were perceived and positioned within the community. It highlights

the importance of uncovering the multiple power relations which characterise young people's everyday lives and indicates that including youths in local communities to create feeling of belonging is not only an issue of financial resources. In addition it could be shown that young people actively negotiate their access and use of places and spaces.

These findings contribute to providing empirical insights into young people's agency which Holloway and Valentine (2000) have called for. It would be over simplistic, however, to conclude that young people thus become producers of their own biographies and can make use of new opportunities as described by Beck, Beck-Gernsheim and Giddens (see Chapter 2). It rather became clear that the ability or motivation to develop such strategies varied immensely amongst young people, often leaving those more disadvantaged behind who are already in a disadvantaged position. Such insights help to understand the (re) construction of inequalities amongst young people and can be taken as a starting point to address structural forms of inequalities more effectively. The findings thus offer a deeper insight into the reasons why some young people might benefit more from new opportunities than others.

One aspect that has been mainly neglected in previous research but which proved to have a major impact on young people's understanding and use of their local environment represents the multiple power-relations amongst young people. The analysis showed that participants identified themselves through their use of specific places which can result in feelings of belonging as well as feelings of fear or clear distancing. It further became clear that participants used their insight knowledge about the 'local geographies of youths' to (re)construct their identities in avoiding or creating places that matched their lifestyles (see also Matthews, Limb & Percy-Smith 1998; Massey 1998;

Robinson 2000). These geographies of youth as well as the power inequalities amongst groups of young people explained, for example, why some participants avoided specific places including institutional services such as youth clubs. The multiple power-relations amongst young people need to be taken more seriously, however, to develop an inclusive and supportive environment for local youths.

Finally, the chapter analysed young people's understanding of how growing up in a post-socialist region affected their everyday lives. This aspect was understood as an additional dimension to young people's negotiation of rural knowledge as it impacted on their concept of 'rurality'. The analysis indicated that the post-socialist context still has a strong impact on how young people perceive their everyday lives. Young people's first reaction to the question if they would define themselves as East Germans was very often a clear: yes. However, the analysis of the focus group discussion revealed that this self-description included highly ambiguous understandings of the East-West German relationship and of the impact of post-socialist transformation processes on people's everyday lives.

On the one hand it became apparent that young people clearly identified poor job- and training-opportunities as the main disadvantage of their East German rather than their rural residency. It helps to understand why they identified themselves as East Germans rather than rural youth. Reunification was in this context understood as having created new options to realise personal aims and ambitions, giving East Germans access to the West German and international job market. Participants thus highlighted that leaving the region and building a career somewhere else (most likely in West Germany)

was a new opportunity which had emerged with the fall of the wall rather than a burden or additional disadvantage.

On the other hand, young people (re)produced popular stereotypes that referred to essential differences between East and West Germans with regard to lifestyles and values. They highlighted that the socialist upbringing of their parents and grandparents still had a major impact on people's life in East Germany resulting in essential differences between the two parts of Germany. Young people even predicted the persistence of this German-German divide for at least another generation.

Further analysis revealed, however, that the understanding of fundamental differences between East and West Germans often originated from young people's parents and/or grandparents. Participants often described that they had been growing up in an atmosphere of antipathy against West Germans and western lifestyles. It means that the understanding of fundamental East-West German differences often represented a dominant context which characterised young people's everyday lives. These understandings seemed to be constantly reproduced not only by the older generations but also by the media which had a strong impact on participants understanding of the East-West German relationship. Young people's explanation that they had *inherited* such understandings indicated that they perceived these East-West German differences as 'naturally given'. On the other hand, they expressed some scepticism about the validity of stereotypes since they did not originate from young people's own experiences. In particular, participants who have had frequent personal contact with, for example, relatives in West Germany challenged the stereotypical understanding that was promoted by some teachers or adults.

Participants also often referred to a lack of understanding regarding the socialist experiences of their parents as well as the desire to remain or return to the socialist way of life. Young people clearly identified that although socialist experiences and the post-socialist transformation process still had a major effect on people's everyday lives in East Germany they affected young people differently than the older generations. Participants highlighted, that this was particularly the case for the new chances that had emerged with reunification as they represented opportunities particularly for *young people*. It means that participants did not describe themselves generally as 'losers' of reunification but rather highlighted the increasing opportunities which were available to develop their future job-careers in the West. It indicates that young people had the general feeling that they could – in contrast to their parents and grandparents - choose what to do with their lives, ambitions and dreams. According to the understanding that their economic disadvantage was connected to their geographical position the opportunity to migrate was therefore seen as a way to take responsibility for their own lives.

Participants understanding that people are affected differently by the transformation process and that the younger generation might have more chances to profit from new opportunities which emerged with reunification of the two German states challenges previous research findings. It particularly challenges descriptions of East German youth as the 'loser of reunification' and the understanding of East German identity as the outcome of feeling being treated as 'second class citizens' in united Germany (Meulemann 1998). These findings highlight the importance of understanding young people's rural lives as being characterised by power-relations that go *beyond the local* context. It thus supports the call to use a more progressive understanding of place (Massey

1993) and to overcome the dichotomous concept of the rural as local and the urban as global (see Chapter 2). At the same time it highlights the need to listen to young people's voices and to acknowledge them as experts of their own lives.

The dominance of the East-West German relationship for young people's understanding of their own lives, however, also questions in how far the persistent counter position between the global and the local (see Massey 2005) can sufficiently capture power-relations which neither fit easily in this (still) dichotomous understanding of spaces. These findings raise new questions with regard to the impact of a perceived generational divide on young people's everyday and future lives. It becomes particularly important with regard to young people's (future) transition into the job market and their migration plans. That is why the following chapter will provide an in-depth analysis of the multiple ways in which young people negotiate the dimension of 'rural work' (Panelli 2002). It will reflect on young people's perceptions of personal opportunities and limitations and the ways they cope with, challenge or overcome these perceived disadvantages.

CHAPTER 6

Young people's perceptions of personal opportunities and limitations in the context of negotiating 'rural work'

6. Introduction

As shown in Chapter 5, participants identified the lack of training facilities and job opportunities within the region as the main concern. It became clear that this was not understood as a rural but rather an East German disadvantage. To understand the interlinkage between structural forms of support provided for young people in the region and young people's agency, the services used by young people to improve their future prospects will be analysed. It thus provides an in-depth analysis of the dimension of the 'negotiation of rural work' as discussed by Panelli (2002 see Chapter 3) and adds to getting a deeper insight into the power-relations that characterise their everyday lives. Attention will be given to forms of social advantages or disadvantages identified by participants and how they coped with or aimed to challenge these perceived disadvantages.

Rather than aiming to provide a comprehensive overview of initiatives and services available for young people in the region this chapter focuses on participants' perceptions and their use of such services. This follows the understanding that young people's experiences with these services and the strategies they develop to overcome disadvantages give a deep insight into the way they perceive their personal options and limits (see Müller et al. 1994; Evans et al. 1999). It will contribute to a deeper understanding of how young

people growing up in rural East Germany perceive new opportunities and risks offering an insight why some of them might profit or suffer more from them than others. The findings thus contribute to analysing social inequalities in the context of second modernity and the meaning of the post-socialist transformation process for young people's everyday lives in rural East Germany. As young people's chances to access training facilities and finding a job within the region seemed to represent the major concern for those young people who participated in all stages of the research project (n=67), this chapter also includes some findings from the questionnaire which was filled out by 124 respondents. Due to the way the questionnaires were handed out, filled out and returned (see Chapter 4), however, these findings will be discussed in the light of the qualitative data analysis.

6.1 The ambiguity of perceived chances and risks

As discussed in Chapter 5 participants particularly highlighted that the post-socialist transformation process affected people differently and that new opportunities which had emerged with reunification were perceived as opportunities for the younger generation in particular. This did not mean, however, that participants were not concerned about their own future careers. Participants rather repeatedly highlighted their concerns about the insecurity of getting a job. The perception of being at risk of becoming unemployed was reinforced by young people's experiences that even those who are willing to work can end up in long-term unemployment, as 16 year old Ann described:

Ann (G10G3/841)^{liv}: My mum has been unemployed for more than 6 Years now. She has written so many applications – we could use them as wall-paper for the whole flat now.

That the high concern about their future prospects was shared by young people of all educational levels was supported by findings from the questionnaire. The data revealed nearly half of the participants (48%) ranked their personal job opportunities in the region as *bad* or *without reasonable chance*, while 41% described their chances as *moderate* (see figure 6.1). Less than 12% of young people described their chances as *good*, including one respondent who described his/her chance as *very good*. These perceptions of future chances within the region were not significantly dependent on gender ($p=0.485$), age ($p=0.185$) or educational achievement of respondents ($p=0.728$).

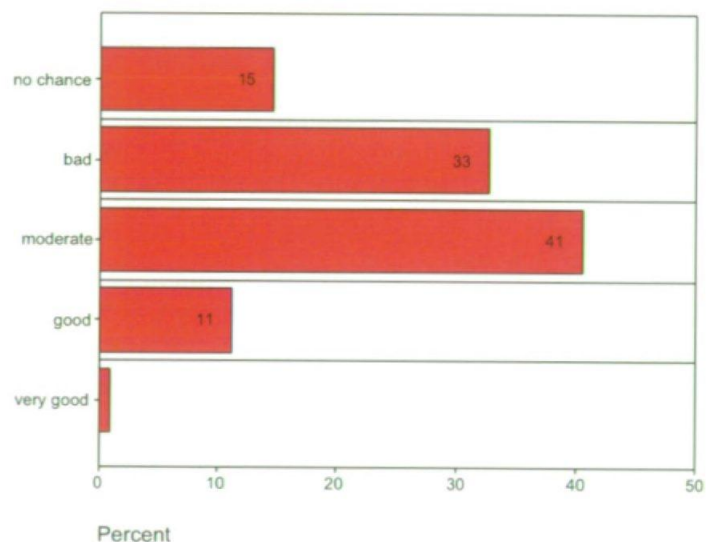


Figure 6.1: Perception of future job opportunities in local region
(Source: Author)

Participants gave similar responses with regard to the question if they worried about the job situation in the region. The majority of students (63%) stated that they sometimes worried about the job situation while nearly every

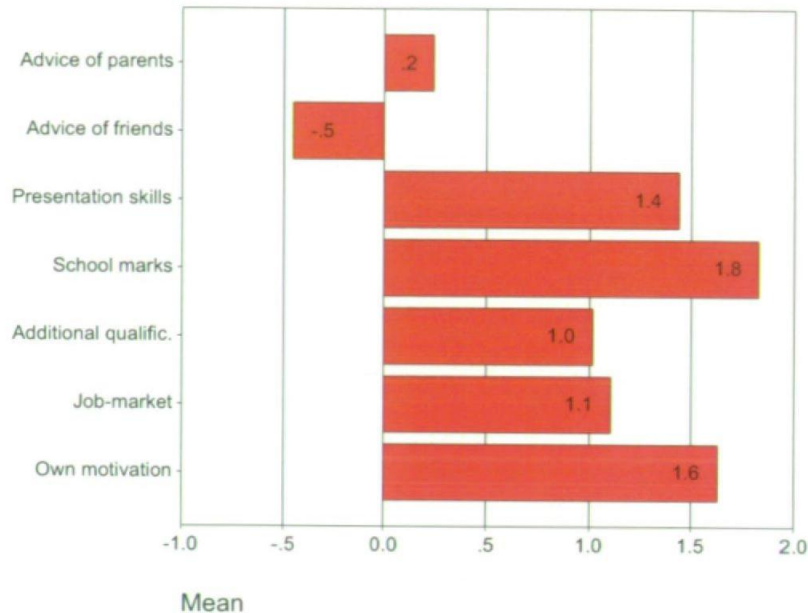
third participant (27%) indicated that they *worried often* about their future career. Only 10% of respondents stated that they did *not worry at all*. When analysing young people's level of concern by using Mann Whitney, no significant differences were found in relation to participants age ($p=0.107$) or educational level ($p=0.306$). It became clear, however, that female participants were more likely to worry than boys ($U=1375.000$; $p=0.049$). This corresponds with findings discussed in Chapter 5 which highlighted that female participants often perceived their job prospects within the region as more restricted than those of their male counterparts. This also corresponds with findings on rural youth in other European countries (as discussed in Chapter 3).

The results generally support Förster's (2002) findings that the majority of East Germans do no longer believe in a secure future (see also Brake 1996; Deutsche Shell 2002, 2006). However, it became very clear that getting unemployed or not being able to get job training was seen as a *personal risk* which everybody had to overcome individually. It meant that participants perceived their own future as being primarily dependent on their own effort.

Maren (GO10G2/1015)lv: I mean it depends on me in the end, doesn't it? My marks in school are not so brilliant at the moment, so I really need to do more schoolwork if I want to get a job. I think I just need to study harder for it.

This understanding that their futures lay in their own hands was also reflected in the results from the questionnaire. To get an insight into young people's perceptions of what is needed to get a good job participants were further asked to evaluate the importance of seven dimensions for their job opportunities. The results from the questionnaire (see Figure 6.2) indicate that

personal abilities, motivations and qualifications were perceived as the most influential ones by participants.



(Minimum -2 = not important at all, maximum 2 = very important, n = 124)

Figure 6.2: Dimensions which potentially influence the future career
(Source: Author)

It indicates that participants perceived those aspects as the most influential that they perceived as having control of and which they felt they could personally influence. Participants did not refer to, for example, the conditions of the job market as one of the key aspects to succeed. As discussed in Chapter 5, however, the opportunities were often perceived as *western* opportunities. Maria (16 years old) described, for example, what would happen if she stayed in the region:

Maria (G10G3/875)^{vi}: I am really scared that I do not get any vocational training, I mean; I could probably go into higher education, but after that? What do I do then? Then I sit here and can't do anything, because there is nothing to do here.

Participants' perceptions were thus complex and sometimes even included contradictory understandings of opportunities and restrictions as the following quotes indicate:

Andrea (G10G3/993)^{lvii}: We have endless opportunities – we just can't make use of them.

Mareen (G10G3/1050)^{lviii}: People always say that we can choose what we want to do but, well we may have opportunities but we can't really choose. There are just too many young people for the jobs that are available.

Robert (RE10G2/108)^{lix}: Well, nowadays you have to take what you can get because there are not many jobs available. But I think when you work hard in school and thus get good marks then you have good chances even though the job situation is quite bad.

Although participants drew a connection between their East German residency and the risk of becoming or being unemployed, they did not automatically perceive themselves as the victims of the reunification process. The emphasis on personal responsibilities and young people's own agency in developing their biographies corresponds with Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (2002) and Giddens' (1994) description of identity formation in second modernity. The focus group discussions revealed, however, that young people's everyday life experiences often contradicted this understanding of personal freedom and choice, referring to multiple dimensions of exclusion and disadvantages. The ambiguous picture that emerged seemed to be the outcome of participants conflicting everyday life experiences. As already discussed in Chapter 5 it indicates that participants perceived opportunities as *available* (in the West) but *not yet accessible* (as they were still living in the East). These contradictory perceptions indicate that we have to be more careful in how to define 'opportunities' in second modernity as it highlights that an

understanding of new options might not automatically mean that they are also perceived as accessible to young people. It is further important to understand which implications such contradictory perceptions have on young people's everyday lives and their understanding of personal opportunities and restrictions.

The following sections will therefore focus on these experiences and how they affected participants understanding of their personal opportunities. It will be analysed how young people negotiated the dimension of rural work, by focusing on how they perceived their chances to develop their future careers and how they prepared themselves for the transition from school to the job market. It will be shown that young people identified a number of aspects as enabling or restricting indicating that they were facing structural disadvantages to develop their own careers. In addition, it will be analysed which strategies young people developed to challenge and overcome these disadvantages and thus to improve their personal choices.

6.2 Dimensions of influence on people's access to the job market: young people's perspectives

The focus group discussions revealed that participants had a very complex understanding of aspects influencing their chances in the job market. These were centered on young people's understanding of *general requirements and skills* needed. In this context and in accordance with the results from the questionnaire young people highlighted the importance of the following dimensions:

- Education (including the importance of financial resources to be able to attain required educational standards)
- Flexibility and mobility
- Access to relevant information
- Gaining additional qualifications

The following sections will analyse participant's experiences and perceptions on support available to prepare them for the transition from school to the job market. It will further be shown which strategies they developed to overcome perceived disadvantages or insufficiencies.

6.2.1 The importance of education

As indicated in the questionnaire results, participants perceived education as the most important factor influencing their future job opportunities. They argued that they would not have any chance to find a job without finishing school as the following quote from Melanie demonstrates:

Melanie (GO10G2/1684)lx: Sometimes I wish that I would have finished school already or just to stop going and to drop out. But then I think: well, great, then I don't have a school qualification and then I can't do anything.

Their time at school was thus described as essential for laying the groundwork for their future lives. This understanding was generally shared by the majority of participants and ties in with Beck's, Beck & Beck-Gernsheim's and Giddens' understanding of the self becoming a 'reflexive project' in second

modernity (see Chapter 2) which has resulted in an individualisation of identities.

The *level* of educational qualification was also seen as important. Referring to an increasing value of higher education, young people highlighted that getting the *Abitur* (corresponds with A-levels) would put them in a much better position to apply for jobs as the following excerpt from a discussion among 14 year old students shows:

Tanja (GY8G3/475)lxi: Or you compare the jobs which someone from a Hauptschule could normally do, these are now more likely to be given to somebody with Abitur that is really much more likely (...)

NDS: Would you say that you are in a better position with doing the Abitur then?

Tanja: Well, a bit at least. I mean, there are also enough Würstchenverkäufer that have Abitur but at least they are Würstchenverkäufer and don't depend on benefit payments. That is definitely at least a small advantage.

Aiming for higher education was seen as a way to improve their chances in the job market even in relation to jobs that normally did not require such a level of qualification. Young people referred in this context to the practice of local employers who were increasingly demanding high qualifications even for part-time jobs:

Melanie (GO10G3/1011)lxii: Well, in the past, three or four years ago, everybody could find work there [local CD-factory]. But now you have to have Abitur to even get a part-time job, to do the packing although pupils can do that as well. That is really weird. They also frequently fire people even those who have been working there for more than ten years now. They [the employees] are scared every year to lose their jobs.

These increased educational requirements were making access to jobs more difficult for people with lower school-leaving qualifications. As Melanie was

not going to get an Abitur, she felt at risk of being excluded even from lower-skilled jobs. However, according to Melanie, this did not only apply to young people but also to adults who had been working for years. It highlights, that participants did not see young people as being at risk in particular. The danger of not getting or even losing a job was rather perceived as a general risk people had to face and thus did not result in a feeling of being more at risk than older generations. It further meant that it was particularly important for participants from a lower educational background to achieve a school leaving certificate that would allow them to get the job training they were hoping for. For those who were already aiming for the highest educational achievement (the Abitur), however, it was more an issue of grade inflation (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977) through gaining additional skills and qualification which they could add to their CV.

Doing the Abitur was thus not automatically connected with the aim of going to university but was seen by participants as a way to improve their chances of getting vocational training or any other type of job. Claudia for example described her motives to do the Abitur as follows:

Claudia (RE10G4/122)lxiii: Well, I want to do the Abitur first and then work with children.

NDS: That means you want to study at University?

Claudia: No, not at all. But I have better chances of getting job training with Abitur.

That participants saw qualification as a key dimension to succeed in the job market corresponds with other findings from studies of young people's everyday lives in modern industrialised countries (see Furlong & Carmel 1997; Evans 2002). This was also confirmed by empirical studies on young people's

experiences and perceptions in the German context (see Deutsche Shell 2002, 2006). Young people growing up in the eastern part of Germany thus share similar understandings of what is needed to profit from the new opportunities that are connected with second modernity. However, participants felt that everybody in the region was affected by these changes. It means that they did not see it as an additional risk which only young people had to cope with. In addition, participants' everyday experiences were often much more ambiguous. The contradicting experiences they made will be described in more detail below as they often affected how young people perceived their personal opportunities and options.

6.2.2 Education as enabling – education as restricting: Ambiguity of young people's everyday life experiences

Although young people highlighted the importance of education, they also pointed out that better qualifications or higher degrees did not always guarantee greater success in the job market. Participants often referred to experiences of friends, family or community members who were struggling to get a job, even though they had achieved exceptionally good school leaving qualifications.

Nadine (GO8G2/1083)lxiv: But some leave with the best marks and they also don't get a job. I know a girl who had a really tough time. She was here last year and got a first in her school exams and could hardly find a job.

NDS (GO10G3/951)lxv: But generally would you say when you are really good in school and when you are a bit clever then you have a good chance [to get a job]?

Patrick: No.

Anja: No (...) Well some people who are really good [at school] still haven't found any vocational training places yet.

Participants tried to make sense of these contradictory experiences and to translate them into strategies for their own future lives. It seemed often unclear to participants, however, how best to improve their job opportunities. Some participants had experienced, for example, that going for higher education could even become an obstacle to find a good job:

Tanja (GY8G3/497)^{lxvi}: It could happen that a student from a Realschule has really high marks whereas the student from the Gymnasium has only moderate results.

Manuela: Yes, then it is better to have a better Realschul degree.

Tanja: It means that having an Abitur is probably not always an advantage.

NDS: Well, but then you can study at University.

Dirk: Yeah, but I have read in a newspaper that they [employees] had one applicant from a Gymnasium and one from a Realschule and they did not take the student from the Gymnasium but the other one!

As for reasons why employees may choose a Regionalschul student over a student from a Gymnasium, participants referred to financial aspects that make it more attractive to employ less educated people:

NDS (GO10G2/1845)^{lxvii}: Do you think that everybody has equal chances to get a job?

Christiane: No, not at all. I mean, well, sometimes you have to have really good marks, but on the other hand: when you have Abitur and your marks are too good, then they can't pay you. I mean, that is weird. You really don't know what to do.

Anja: Yeah, over-qualified.

Christiane: Yes, that's the risk.

These experiences were contradictory to the perception that education had generally become the key dimension to succeed in the job market. Referring to examples from the local job market where higher education had not helped to improve people's job chances, some students thus concluded that the

effort to get Abitur and spending another three years in school may not be worth it as Patrick pointed out:

Patrick (GO10G3/958)lxviii: I mean, nowadays you have to consider if you really want to get Abitur. If you do Abitur you lose several years and then the unemployment rate is even higher than it is today. You should really think twice about it.

It became clear in the focus group discussions that participants did not expect the job situation to improve over the next few years. Staying in higher education was thus understood by some as worsening their already limited chances. The translation of these local experiences into strategies to improve their own position in the job market did thus sometimes include not aiming for the highest possible qualification.

To better understand the origin of these contradictions I want to refer to Shucksmith's (2000) work on young people's social exclusion in rural areas. Referring to research on unemployment in rural areas conducted by Cartmel and Furlong (2000), Shucksmith highlights that rural young people are generally integrated in two separate labour markets: the *national labour market* on one hand and the *local labour market* on the other hand. The first is characterised as the distant and often well paid market. Access to this market, according to Shucksmith (2000) is mainly dependent on education and social background. In contrast to this, rural young people also have access to a poorly paid, often insecure local job market within which their prospects are highly limited.

Participant's ambiguous description of education as both enabling and restricting mirrors their experiences of two quite separate labour markets. Here, it becomes important that participants perceived their local environment as typically *East German* rather than typically *rural* (see Chapter 5). They thus distinguished between two different job markets which they perceived as being

characterised by East-West German rather than urban-rural differences. Participants argued that higher education and qualifications were more important in the West German job market which is why it made sense for them to translate local experiences into strategies to best prepare themselves for the regional market even if it included *not* aiming for the highest possible educational level.

It means that particularly those participants who were hoping to or saw a possibility to stay within the region (and/or within East Germany) perceived this 'under-achievement' as a sensible strategy. This was confirmed in the focus group discussion as scepticism about the benefits of going into higher education was often expressed by students from the *Regionalschule*. Empirical research on young people's migration patterns in East Germany (see Dienel & Gerloff 2003; Land 2003; Lischka 2003; Werz 2001) has shown that young people with higher educational backgrounds are more likely to leave the region than those with intermediate or low educational backgrounds. It indicates that participants from Regional- and Förderschule have a stronger orientation towards the regional job market.

Müller (2001) has further highlighted that young people growing up in East Germany have often experienced a devaluation of their parents' qualifications in the transformation process. In her research on risks and opportunities of rural East German youth in the local and regional job market, Müller (ibid.) found that such experiences sometimes resulted in an understanding that education and qualification does not always lead to success in the job market. This had a strong impact on the strategies young people chose to improve their personal chances, resulting in the development of 'negative assimilation strategies' (Müller 2001: 219) such as getting a lower

qualification. The development of such strategies, however, might exclude these young people even more.

However, we need to be careful not to conclude that there is a neat transfer from parental experiences to those of young people. The analysis of participants' understanding of the impact of post-socialist transformation processes (see Chapter 5) has rather shown that they – representing the first generation growing up in unified Germany since the fall of the Wall – distinguished quite critically between the effects of transformation on them and on their parents' and grandparents' generation. Participants perceive the vast devaluation processes that took place in the years after reunification as an experience that affected the *older generations*. However, participants did not mention the devaluation of their parents' qualifications in any of the focus group discussions which indicates that it might not represent one of the major experiences of exclusion that young people perceived as relevant for their own lives.

It is more important, however, that participants referred to problems accessing the already highly restricted local job market and how they translated their everyday experiences. Patrick's argumentation (see above) that a lower educational level might improve his chances in the job market represents an example of the negative assimilation strategies Müller (2001) identified in her study. The rationale for this strategy, however, can be found in the present day conditions of the rural and the highly competitive and limited job market.

Following Shucksmith's (2000) distinction between the rural/local and the national job markets which have their own access conditions, I argue that these strategies are the outcome of young people's experiences with the rural job market. That is not to say that devaluation effects of the transformation process

might not have affected the way young people prepared themselves for their future career. It seems all the more important, however, that young people perceived their everyday experiences of forms of inclusion and exclusion with regard to the local job market as characteristic for the *East German* job market. This means that they were looking for strategies that would enhance their chances not only with regard to the local but also at least in the regional, East German job market more generally. The chance for young people to find vocational training within their (rural) region, however, was highly limited. Developing strategies for the local job market thus placed these young people in a disadvantaged position when accessing the national job market which is increasingly dependent on high education and additional qualifications.

6.2.3 Paying the price for good education and job training

Participants often highlighted that going into higher education was connected with additional financial costs. It meant that they were dependent on (financial) support from their parents to continue education beyond the period of compulsory schooling. Parents thus had to be able to a) support them financially and to b) share the understanding that higher education would improve their children's future job opportunities. Elena (14; GY8G3/473) described this dependency as follows: *"If you want to go to university but your parents do not have the money, then you can't do it"*. Students from the Gymnasium commented far more than other students on parental support they received. Tanja, for example, even described that her parents were willing to pay for an independent secondary school so that she could get the best education available:

Tanja (GY8G3/302)lxix: And well, my mum went to an open day at the independent Gymnasium in [name of town] and now she does everything to persuade me, so that I want to go there (...).

NDS: And why does she want you to go there?

Tanja: Because she wants to make it possible for me, that's what she said. In case I really want to go there they will, because I mean it costs something like 500 Euros per month and they will put some money aside to enable me to go there, because, I mean we are not really rich and we don't really have the money for it, but she said if I really want to go she will make it possible for me.

NDS: And why is it better to go to this kind of school?

Tanja: Well, firstly: the classes are much smaller and allegedly they improve your school achievement.

This quote demonstrates that some parents were willing and able to facilitate a very high level of educational qualification for their children even at additional financial costs. Despite the rural setting this included the option to send their children to an independent secondary school. However, as Tanja pointed out, access to this was highly restricted to people who could financially afford it. It meant that the majority of young people within the region could actually not make use of this opportunity. As already highlighted, however, parents and grandparents had often experienced a devaluation of their own occupational qualifications due to the transformation process (Müller 2001). One could assume that not all parents shared the understanding that aiming for the highest educational achievement would put their children in a better position. Further research is therefore needed that investigates how parental perceptions affect young people's preparation for the future job market.

In addition, young people like Antje highlighted the problem of low salaries paid during the time of vocational training. Referring to her sister's experiences, she stated:

Anja (GO10G2/270)^{lxx}: I am really scared, because it happened to my sister when she finished school. She was on vocational training and she had to count every penny. She couldn't even buy a pair of shoes because she wasn't earning enough!

Several respondents picked up on this problem of becoming financially independent, mainly referring to the requirement of doing several weeks or months of unpaid work-placements before getting vocational training. Melanie referred to the specific conditions of getting vocational training at a local photographer's shop:

Melanie (GO10G2/1655)^{lxxi}: You have to work for three months [in the company] without getting paid. Three months, that's incredible (...) and even then you can't be sure that you get the training. I really don't know how you are supposed to finance this.

While this quote demonstrates that Melanie was well informed about the local job market it also shows that the conditions to get regional vocational training places were often perceived as connected with financial risks. Melanie was not sure if she would be able to take that risk. It is thus not surprising that she was looking somewhere else for more secure training positions.

Regional job opportunities, including work placements and vocational training, were often perceived as holding additional risks for young people that would keep them highly dependent on the financial support of their parents. Such parental support, however, was often not available or not desired by young people who were aiming to develop their own careers and lives independently. Young people were thus looking for ways to improve their opportunities individually. In this context personal flexibility and mobility were identified as essential dimensions which will be elaborated in the following section.

6.2.4 The importance of flexibility and mobility

With regard to their future careers, young people identified flexibility as one of the key elements to be successful as the regional opportunities were highly restricted. They argued that it was not enough to decide which job they liked best, but that it was important to think of alternative careers to increase their chances as the following quote demonstrates:

Christiane (GO10G3/971)lxxii: You always have to think about what else you could do so that you always have an alternative. Nowadays you can't become set on a specific job. If you want to learn something you have to have other alternatives. Or in case you don't get a job then you have to think about what else you could do. Well, you always have to have thought about all this really.

To avoid disappointment and to increase their job opportunities participants often developed alternative ideas about the kind of job they wanted to do. Not to have a fixation about a specific type of job was perceived as a precondition to be successful in the job market. Such flexibility, however, was dependent on young people's mobility as the local job market did not offer enough opportunities.

Mobility was often not seen as the *best way* of improving their job chances. This included the understanding that young people who were not willing to be mobile could not make use of and thus benefit from new opportunities. This became particularly clear in the disparaging way participants spoke about those young women and men who were still living in the region although they had not found a job. Participants referred to them as the 'Assis'/'Asoziale', which can be translated as 'social misfits'. These young people were described as follows:

Robert (RE10G1/125)lxxiii: The youth club is the meeting point for the unemployed. It's a bit dodgy (original: *assi*).

Nadja: Yeah, next to the kindergarten.

NDS: And it is mainly younger ones going there?

Nadja: No, there are only people who do not want to work.

Christoph: Yes, the ones who do not want to work.

Robert: Who do not want to work; they meet there in the afternoons. Like 16 to 20 year olds.

NDS: And why do you say they do not want to work?

Robert: Well, I don't know, they have (*Hauptschulabschluss*), they only just made it, they have never written an application form, or not more than two.

Nadja: Yeah or they drop out [of their vocational training].

Christoph: Or they do not even turn up for it.

Nadja: That's it. And if they get something, they drop out after a while.

Robert: If they are lucky to get something at all. And that is why they get stuck here. But they seem to like it this way.

Participants clearly distanced themselves from this group of young adults and saw it as an indicator of personal failure that they stayed in the region without having a job. This was perceived as a self-inflicted reduction of personal opportunities and as declining responsibility for their own lives. Despite the perception of structural disadvantages in the region, participants thus understood the decision to stay in the region without a job as a denial of personal responsibility. This is in line with findings by Müller (2001) who showed that rural East Germans perceived other young adults as losers if they did not migrate. It indicates that the perception of the need to leave the region to build up their own lives and careers had become an integral part of participants' life planning. It was perceived as one of the key steps with regard to taking over responsibility for their own lives.

This explains why participants often considered leaving the region, although they liked it as their place of residence. For the majority of young people the willingness to leave was not understood as opting against the region

they were living in but as opting for opportunities that were available beyond this region.

6.2.5 The importance of information

Participants highlighted that good information about job opportunities, job profiles and specific requirements was crucial to improve their chances in the job market as it helped them to prepare themselves more effectively. Different ways and sources were described by young people that gave an insight into the multiple options and restrictions they experienced to access relevant information. However, participants also developed their own strategies to overcome such restrictions. It became further clear that participants were generally aiming for a more individual way to prepare themselves which they perceived as an essential condition to improve their personal opportunities. It will be shown that young people often felt that the development of a more individual profile was not sufficiently addressed by institutional services that were available to them.

6.2.5.1 Institutionalised access to information

Job Centres

One way for young people to inform themselves about job opportunities was through *job centres*. Participants reported that they were often encouraged by teachers to make an appointment for professional advice¹⁸. In some schools, teachers approached parents of students from grade 10 directly to emphasize

¹⁸ This was not the case in the Gymnasium as students there were prepared for higher education and thus did not need advice with regard to vocational training.

the importance of this service. However, it was up to the students themselves to make an appointment with the consultant at the job centre.

Older students from the *Regionalschule* often reported that they had already made their own appointments. However, they also described that they found it difficult to get an appointment as the job centre was open only once a week in the next biggest town. Participants further reported that the quality of information and assistance they received depended strongly on the consultant who was running the office which represents a common problem rural young people are facing (see also Müller 2001). In addition, they felt that advice was more beneficial once they had decided which job they were interested in. Job centers were thus often not seen as helpful to explore personal interests and qualifications.

Participants also highlighted that the information and advice did not always improve their chances for gaining employment as *“you go there and you get some addresses and then somebody else goes who wants to do the same job as you and he gets the same addresses!”* (Doreen, GO10G2/1464). From their point of view this did not sufficiently take into account that they had to find innovative and individualised ways to access information that would increase their chances to succeed in the highly competitive and limited job market.

Participants also complained that they were mainly referred to job opportunities in West Germany and thus were not sufficiently made aware of local opportunities. It means that they perceived the kind of information and support offered by job centers as very general and sometimes biased. This supports findings from empirical research on people's job search strategies in Scottish rural labour markets conducted by Lindsay et al. (2005). The authors showed that jobs are often not even advertised through local job centers due to

the informality of the rural labour market and the importance of social networks within it. The limited practical value of formal job search services thus seems to represent a general problem within rural areas. However, that young people felt they were mainly directed towards the West German market highlights the importance of the East-West German context these young people grow up in. It confirms more critical research findings which have highlighted that the context of transformation continues to be relevant for how people experience present conditions (see Riordan et al. 1995; Machacek 1997; Smith 1998; Roberts et al. 2000; Pilkington et al. 2002; Pilkington & Johnson 2003; Pilkington 2004; Hörschelmann & Schäfer 2005).

Referring to empirical studies of young people in rural Britain and other European countries, Shucksmith (2004) has argued that the deficiency of guidance and advice for rural youths sometimes results in *educating them out of the rural areas*. With regard to the experiences and perceptions of participants of this study it could be similarly argued that there is a tendency of *educating them out of the eastern part of Germany* towards the western job markets.

School based support: Berufsfrühorientierung

Young people received further professional support to prepare for their future careers within schools through *Berufsfrühorientierung*-sessions. This service is only provided in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern due to the high unemployment rates in and the ongoing out-migration of young people from the region. *Berufsfrühorientierung* (BfO: early job orientation) started in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in 1998 and is an initiative developed and financed by the EU, the regional government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the “German Children and Youth Fund” and a regional NGO (see www.bfo-mv.de. Deutsche

Kinder- und Jugendstiftung 2003). It funds projects that are designed to increase young people's job prospects by consulting and informing them about opportunities through, for example, work placements. Furthermore, BfO offers young people help to develop their personal profiles so that they can make an informed decision about which job they want. Young people from the age of 14 thus get professional advice on how to prepare themselves for their future careers. These services are only provided in MV and are organised by social workers in schools, outside of the school curriculum, which means that they are not compulsory.

In nearly all the schools¹⁹ that took part in the study social workers were offering this kind of training in the early afternoons for 9th and 10th grade students. The sessions included workshops on personal profiles, preparation for job interviews and writing applications. In informal interviews with social workers they often highlighted, that it was an important aim to build up a network with regional employees to introduce students to local and regional job opportunities. If students participated for at least 45 hours (this could include hours they spent in work placements) they were given a certificate which they could attach to future job applications.

Referring to the high number of activities organized for students to prepare them for the future job market, Ms P, a social worker, described that the support young people could get had never been better:

Ms P (Interview September 2004)lxxiv: I think there were not so many possibilities 5 or 6 years ago as now. I mean, of course, there are still not many jobs available, that is for sure, but with respect to the general preparation and support young people get it is not bad at all. With regard to [next bigger town] I know that you can take courses for free. Young

¹⁹ The only exception where BfO was not provided was the Gymnasium as students here are aiming to go into higher education and thus do not need to apply for vocational training after finishing school.

people have to invest two weeks of their holidays, but in that time they can get everything done for their application.

Participants' perception of the information and advice they received for, for example, composing their CV or application letters was often contradictory.

Melanie (GO10G2/1551)lxxv: Well, we have done CVs with at least three or four different teachers.

Anja: Yeah and they are always different.

Melanie: Every teacher did it differently. That sucks. And you started thinking: Ok, now I know how to do it and then you got a mark and we all got bad marks because we didn't do it exactly how this specific teacher wanted it to be done. And then did CVs in BfO as well and it was again completely different. I really don't understand that because in the end it should be somehow the same shouldn't it?

While this example shows that teachers did facilitate job preparation within the school context it also reveals that young people perceived a lack of cooperation amongst teachers as misleading and not always as helpful. According to participants, this often prevented an optimal preparation for the job market. Young people complained that CVs written in schools did not always take their personal skills and profile or employers' specific requirements into account but rather followed highly standardised criteria and general models. From young people's point of view, however, employers often requested a more individualised application. They therefore argued that the way they were taught to write CVs in school did not correspond with the requirements of employers:

Robert (RE10G2/482)lxxvi: When you write a CV in school, you could hand it in for the German lessons for example. However, if you really want the job then you can't hand in such a CV.

Therefore students pointed out that teachers were probably not the best persons to give advice on these matters:

Melanie (GO10G2/1586)lxxvii: But I would not show it [the CV] to a teacher.

Anja: No. I even wouldn't know which teacher I could show it to. No, no way. Because teachers have a specific opinion about everybody and everything. I don't like that at all. Well, I guess I would go to the job centre and ask if they have any templates how to do it properly (...) And then I would compare them and have a look which one is better and more original, that's how I would do it.

The focus group discussions further revealed that participants were often more comfortable to ask social workers for advice than teachers. Social workers thus became an important contact point for young people offering information and advice. Being asked who they would ask for advice about writing an application participants thus usually replied as follows:

Melanie (GO10G2/1577)lxxviii: Well, I would go to the job centre.

Anja: Yeah, me too.

Melanie: To this guy [at the job centre] or to Ms S [social worker] who works here because she does the BfO sessions as well.

It means that social workers played an important role for young people to get professional advice for their future careers. The introduction of BfO in schools thus often meant for young people that they could develop a trustful and stable relationship with a professional. Considering that services for young people are further decreasing within the research area, the importance of school-workers cannot be emphasized enough.

In addition, all schools within the region were increasingly affected by the *risk of school closure*. This meant, according to participants, that teachers did not have enough time or were not sufficiently motivated to address extra curricula issues like young people's individual preparation for the job market. From this point of view the shift of responsibilities through the introduction of

social workers released teachers from preparing their students and thus offered a more independent source of information available to young people.

Participants also complained that they had to depend on a very small number of adult gatekeepers for access to relevant information. If these individuals (like class-teacher, social worker and youth consultants) were themselves not well informed or not motivated/interested to support young people it often meant that an important source of advice and support was lost. Such an incidence was described by one group of students referring to the behaviour of their class teacher:

Sebastian (RE10G1/615)lxxix: He doesn't care about anything.

Nadja: No, not at all.

Robert: Sometimes when we have events together with another class, that is horrible. Normally the other class-teacher has to make sure that we are included as well. Because our teacher doesn't do anything.

Nadja: Yeah, otherwise we would not be included in anything, I would say.

Christoph: Yes, we wouldn't.

According to young people's perspectives this unreliability and disinterest of adult gate-keepers had a negative impact not only on their inclusion in more fun-oriented events but also on their participation in events that were important for their future lives like trips to job fairs and so on. Therefore, participants argued that it was not enough to rely on a small number of adult gatekeepers and institutionalised forms of knowledge and information transfers. They had to look for more individualised ways of accessing relevant information which will be elaborated in the following sections.

6.2.5.2 Additional resources of information

In the focus group discussions young people referred to the importance additional sources of information which they accessed individually. These included:

- Internet
- Individual initiatives within the local context
- Family and friends and the meaning of social networks

While the development of multiple strategies to get access to relevant information can be seen as an expression of young people's agency it also became clear that young people's opportunities, abilities and motivations to do so varied immensely amongst them.

Internet

Internet access is often connected with a new optimism for rural areas. Like other information and communication technologies it contributes to enabling rural residents to become 'global villagers' (Philo 1992) who have access to the global world. Recent studies have challenged this optimistic view, however, highlighting that young people's access and use of the internet varies highly amongst them depending on gender, age, social background as well as their rural or urban residency (see Holloway and Valentine 2000; Laegran 2002; Looker & Thiessen 2003). This research indicates that young people profit highly unevenly from new technologies and communication technologies. This section analyses how rural East Germans valued internet access for preparing themselves for the job market and if differences in using this source became apparent amongst respondents.

The internet was seen by a number of participants as a way to improve their chances of finding a job and to be more independent from institutional career services. Susan (15) for example explained in this context that she had spent hours searching the internet to compile a list of hospitals that train nurses. Being asked if she could not get such a list from the job centre she replied:

Doreen (GO10G2/1411)lxxx: Well, perhaps they have a list, but you know, there may be 30 people asking for training opportunities for nurses and they all get the same list so they all send their applications to the same hospitals.

Participants further reported that they were using the internet to practice specific placement tests, to get information about job training opportunities as well as about the specific businesses and professions they were interested in. However, young people's access and use of the internet was distributed unevenly. In the questionnaire participants were asked to indicate how often (daily/weekly/monthly/never) they used different forms of media and information technologies like the internet (see table 6.1).

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never	Total
Förderschule	0	1	0	5	6
	0%	17%	0%	83%	100%
Regionalschule	9	28	19	18	74
	12%	38%	26%	24%	100%
Gymnasium	5	16	13	4	38
	13%	42%	34%	11%	100%
Total	14	45	32	27	118
	12%	38%	27%	23%	100%

Table 6.1: Participants' use of the internet

(Source: Author)

As table 6.1 demonstrates, 5 out of 6 students from the Förderschule did not use the internet at all. By contrast, half of the students from the Regionalschule and slightly more than half of the students from the Gymnasium used the internet daily or at least on a weekly basis.

Chi-square analysis revealed a significant relationship between using the internet and level of educational achievement ($p=0.019$). It meant that students aiming for higher levels of educational achievement were more likely to use the internet than those from lower levels. This is in line with other empirical findings on young people's internet use which showed that it is depending on young people's social status and lifestyle (see Deutsche Shell 2002; Laegran 2002; Deutsche Shell 2006). Considering, however, that the internet becomes more and more important for rural young people to get access to appropriate and up to date information on job training as well as job opportunities beyond the local job market (see Müller 2001), those who lack access to the internet or who are not used to use it frequently face a disadvantage to more frequent user.

In addition to the uneven distribution of internet access it became clear that the way young people made use of the internet varied immensely. Paul (15 years old), for example, was the only student from the Förderschule who had access to the internet and mainly used it to download music. He highlighted that it enabled him to get access to music which he could otherwise not afford to buy. The internet thus offered him a way of overcoming financial disadvantages. Paul also used the computer to play some games or look for information about his favourite music bands. He did not, however, use the computer to gather information related to further qualifications, job training or any other issues related with his future career.

The rest of the participating students from this school did not use the internet at all as they had neither a computer at home nor access to one at their school. It therefore did not represent an additional source of information. Students from Regionalschulen and the Gymnasium, by comparison, referred to a much more frequent and wider use of the internet: it included getting information about their hobbies and specific interests, writing computer programs, playing (online) computer games, chatting with friends, gathering information for their homework as well as job training requirements and opportunities. Further, all these students had access to computers at school. Although boys were more likely to refer to use the computer for leisure activities such as playing computer games than girls, no gender difference became apparent in using the internet to gather information that was related to developing their future careers. These findings indicate major differences in the way young people make use of the internet as an additional source of information to prepare themselves for their transition from school to the labour market.

It also became clear, that those who made more frequent use of the internet often critically reflected on the usefulness of the information which the internet offered. Markus, for example, pointed out that most information on the internet did not really allow him to plan his future career, because the information available on the internet often referred only to actual job opportunities. At the time of research, however, students from the 10th grade that were aiming for Realschulabschluss (GCSEs) still had a year left before finishing school so that they were not yet in a position to apply for these jobs.

This inability to plan for the next year caused some students feelings of uncertainty and stress and was seen as an expression of the limitations of the internet as a source for preparing themselves for the future. It means that the internet was valued as one way of information gathering but not as the ultimate solution to overcome the lack of information experienced locally. The internet might also not represent the best way for young people to prepare for the local or regional job market, since local training and job opportunities are often not accessible via formal search services (see Lindsay et al. 2005)

Access to relevant information through individual initiatives within the local context

The focus group discussions revealed that even though participants often did not refer to a strong network of social support within the community they still valued informal strategies highly to improve their future options. To get more detailed and up-to date information on job opportunities some participants highlighted, for example, that asking for direct advice from local businesses or shops was highly valuable. The information young people gathered through these self-initiated investigations often revealed insider knowledge which was not accessible through more formal ways of advice that was given in job centers or on the internet. Katharina for example described her experience as follows:

Katharina (GO10G2/1486)lxxxi: You know, to become a travel agent you would need to apply now. But there is nothing available [on the internet] for next year at the moment and when it will be advertised it will already be too late. What I do now is I go to K [shopping centre] I go in there and ask the ladies for advice. One told me the other day that she applied at the main office and that I should do the same. Well, it is always best to go and ask otherwise you never get anywhere.

Similar to this Melanie (GO10G2/73) described that she went to the local photo shop to ask for training opportunities. Some participants thus found a way to actively address the problem of insufficient information supply. They identified the problem of insufficient information supply and developed their own strategies to improve their situation.

It became apparent, however, that only female students were referring to this kind of self-conducted evaluation of local job opportunities. While boys reported on making use of the internet, they did not refer to any strategies that involved establishing personal connections within the local context. That is to say: male participants referred to already established connections (for example with family members or friends of the family) but did not report on initiating new personal connections themselves. No generalisation can be drawn from this limited number of cases, but these findings could indicate that gender may play an important role for the kinds of strategies young people develop to improve their situation. Girls seemed to develop more proactive strategies which involve building up personal networks to access information and to improve their own situation. Müller (2001) has shown that females are often more flexible and creative with regard to their future plan. Future research needs to elaborate the impact of gender on young people's capacity to develop additional strategies to overcome local disadvantages further.

Even though some young people established ways to be more informed about local job opportunities, participants identified a general lack of knowledge about the local and regional job situation. Therefore, a group of eight 15-16 year old participants made use of the research project to actively change the situation. They developed a research project investigating which kinds of

vocational training opportunities were actually available in their home town. The group interviewed fifteen different local employers about qualifications needed to get a job and to be trained by these local businesses (Figure 6.3).



A special requirement in the photo-shop in our town is that one needs to do a one-year work-placement before starting the apprenticeship. Further requirements are good marks in math, German, physics and chemistry. You have to be at least 16 or 17 years old and it is beneficial if you already have a driving license.

We were informed that this shop offers an apprenticeship. In addition, we asked the photographer why she had chosen this job. She replied that being a photographer was always her dream and that she loves to take pictures of babies and outdoor-pictures like wedding-pictures.

Figure 6.3: Young people's interview-project on local job-opportunities
(Source: Picture taken by participants. Excerpt from their self-conducted interview. Both included here with participants' permission.)

The outcome of the project was not only that young people gained an insight where training places were available but also what the specific professions were about, what motivation people had to do this kind of job and what they liked or disliked about it. Participants perceived this information as an additional source that helped them to make a more informed decision about the kind of profession they were interested in. Participants perceived this information as a valuable insight into the *local job market* and decided to make

the results of their research project accessible to other young people. They therefore organised a small exhibition in the auditorium of their school which ran for several weeks. Similar to the research projects young people developed on regional political topics it is an example of young people's interest in local matters and their identified need to be informed about them. Local and regional knowledge was thus seen by young people as an important resource for identifying and effectively making use of local and regional opportunities and to overcome disadvantages they were facing. To improve their situation young people were willing to engage personally and made use of the project to pursue this aim. It indicates that young people perceived their engagement in the project as a way to challenge existing disadvantages and, in this case, to negotiate their rural knowledge.

However, while this example can be seen as an expression of young people's agency and their motivation to actively improve their situation, such individual search strategies were mainly developed by those from higher educational levels and the ones who had already developed a high level of communication skills. Further, more female participants referred to such active forms of information gathering. It indicates that those young people who are not as active in searching for alternative job search strategies or lack, for example, good communication skills might face considerable additional difficulties in identifying job and training opportunities within the local environment.

Information through family and friends and the meaning of social networks

Research has highlighted the importance of informal networks of social support that characterise rural communities (see Bjarnason & Thorlindsson 2006). Therefore, it has been argued that social network relations play an

important role in rural regions regarding getting access to the job market (Lindsay et al. 2005). However, some groups have been identified as being particularly disadvantaged due to a lack or the high limitation of their social network relations. Young people are seen as one of these disadvantaged groups as they have not yet built up their own personal reputation within the community (Lindsay et al. 2005).

However, contrary to Lindsay et al.'s (2005) findings, respondents in this project had diverse views on the usefulness of such network relations and parental advice. In the questionnaire, participants were asked to rate on a scale from -2 to 2 (-2= unimportant, 2= very important) how influential different aspects were for their future careers. The mean score for advice of parents was '0.2' and for advice from friends '-0.5' which indicates that such advice was valued as very low or even tended to be perceived as less important. The minor importance participants connected with advice and therefore with information given by parents and friends could be explained through Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (2002) argument that parents are no longer able to give advice as second modernity has brought new risks and opportunities which they have never experienced themselves. The focus group discussions confirmed these explanations partly as students highlighted that their parent's ability to inform and support the younger generation about job opportunities, how to apply for jobs and so on was often restricted:

Patrick (GO10G2/944)lxxxii: Well, let's put it like this: they don't have a clue about this anymore.

I: What do you mean?

Patrick: Well, they can't really help me much although they would try to.

I: What do you mean: not anymore?

Patrick: Well, they have their jobs and they have had them for a long time now. I don't know, but they don't have the slightest idea what is going on any more. Also with regard to writing application forms and so on.

I: Do you mean this is because a lot has changed so that they don't have an insight in these things anymore?

Patrick: Yes, a lot has changed since the wall broke down.

This comment indicates, however, that Patrick did not understand parents' inability to support him as the outcome of general modern changes but rather explained it with the changes that are connected with the reunification of the two German states. It indicates that some participants connected the socialist upbringing of their parents with a lack of knowledge about the mechanisms and requirements to perform successfully in the (western) free market economy. This was also implicit in Melanie's explanation why she preferred to ask other people for advice than her parents:

Melanie (GO10G2/1382)lxxxiii: Well I know a number of people who know more about these things, who also have more contact with young people. But our parents, well, I think they don't get that you want to do a more artistic job because they think there is no future. I think that is strange because, well, they just grew up differently.

Parents were thus not always seen as the ones to ask for advice as they themselves did not know more about the actual job-market conditions than their children. This perception was shared by a number of participants and was also reflected in their description of the East-West German relationship and the differences between their own and their parent's lives (see Chapter 5).

In contrast to this, however, a small number of participants highlighted that their parents were particularly well qualified to help and advise them due to their post-socialist transformation experiences. This was explained through the fact that parents often had re-orientated themselves professionally or had

applied for new jobs to escape unemployment and to cope with the effects of post-socialist transformation as the following comments illustrate:

Silke (GO10G2/1058)lxxxiv: My mum was unemployed previously so that she was writing lots of applications as well. That's why I think she can really help me with these things.

Natalie (PE10G2/384)lxxxv: Well, my mum can help me because she attended an application training course recently. And she also has good computer skills because she had to do a vocational retraining to become a media-designer. Anyhow, she didn't get a job after all that.

Some parents (and here particularly mothers) were thus perceived as experts to advise young people because they were similarly affected by the consequences of reunification. The focus group discussions further revealed that other family members were seen as very important for guiding young people's understanding of future opportunities. Participants referred in this context particularly to older brothers or sisters who were seen as being well positioned to give career advice as they were also applying or had already succeeded in finding a job. Patrick, for example, even pointed out that his sister, who had already moved to West Germany, was looking for a training position for him. He planned to follow his sister to West Germany. With her help and contacts he hoped to find a vocational position. Particularly in cases where students described their relation to their parents as problematic, relatives became important points of reference as it also allowed them to become independent from parental control. Patrick's comment furthermore demonstrates that being reunited with family members sometimes represented a motive for young people to leave the region.

The importance of support and advice from family members has also been highlighted in a number of other empirical studies on young people's everyday life experiences in second modernity (see Deutsche Shell 2002; Jentsch & Shucksmith 2004; Jones et al. 2004; Deutsche Shell 2006) and are confirmed – at least partly – in this study. Such findings challenge Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (2002) assumption of the loss of traditional bindings (see Chapter 2) because family support seems to be still important for young people's transition from school to work, leaving those without such support at a disadvantage.

Similar to Böhnisch and Winter's (1990) description of rural youth growing up in two different worlds, participants distinguished between the conditions of the socialist and the capitalist job market. They perceived their parents and grandparents often as more familiar with the socialist than the capitalist system. Socialism, however, belonged to the past and young people perceived themselves as growing up under the conditions of the western, capitalist market. They highlighted that they had not experienced the socialist system and that they aimed for success in the western job market. Participants thus (re)constructed the image of the two different worlds with regard to the world their parents and grandparents lived in and their own, western oriented lives. While some participants felt that their parents were experiencing a clash of these 'two worlds' young people did not refer to such clashes with regard to their own everyday life experiences.

The insights gained through the focus group discussions thus highlighted that participants perceived the socialist up-bringing of the adult generation as well as the effects of the post-socialist transformation process as still relevant.

The questionnaire responses on parents' impact on young people's future lives did not capture the ambiguous perception of parental support that became apparent in the focus group discussions. They rather indicated that young people valued the impact of their parents' and friends' advice as very low. Concluding, however, that the majority of students perceived their parents as unable to give advice overlooks a number of additional reasons that may have affected this response, and which are not unique for the East German context. Some participants described, for example, that they found it sometimes hard to acknowledge the value of their parents' advice:

NDS (RE10G2/492)lxxxvi: Who do you ask for advice then?

Martin: The parents.

NDS: Do you think they are giving good advice?

Martin: Well, sometimes you don't really want to accept their advice I think.

Robert: Yeah, because it seems to be nonsense.

Martin: Well, it is just uncool.

Asking for parents' advice was thus perceived as 'uncool' by some students. In addition, young people's strong sense of being responsible for their future careers was connected with the understanding that only they themselves could improve their position in the job market. In this context parental advice may have been seen as supportive and helpful but not sufficient to improve their personal situation.

6.2.6 Additional qualifications

Participants argued that it was not only essential to do well in school, but that it was also important to get additional qualifications which helped them develop new skills and gave them an insight into different professions. That is

why work-placements were often highly valued by students for making contact with local and regional employers and getting work experience. Work placements were often built into the school curriculum meaning that students from grade 9 and/or grade 10 were given one or two weeks at the beginning of the school-year to work in businesses or institutions within the area. The employers had to write a reference afterwards which students could use for future job applications.

Students from Regionalschulen and the Förderschule placed particularly high value on school-organised work placements as they offered insights into the local job market and helped young people to clarify in which field they wanted to work in the future:

Nadja (RE10G4/150)lxxxvii: It [the work-placement] was really important for me because I got an idea of what I want to be. I did mine at the [local supermarket].

Having identified work-placements as an important way to improve their future job opportunities, some participants reported on self-organized work-placements which they did or were planning to do during their holidays.

*Luise (PE8G2/176)lxxxviii: Well, I have done work-placements already; I have been working in the pharmacy and the hotel and things.
I: Why have you done so many already?
Luise: Well, firstly because I wanted to earn some money during the summer holidays and I did it as a work placement as my mum said I would learn more and get an idea about this job. So I worked in the hotel during summer and three weeks at the dentist and so on.*

Getting paid for placements was a major motivation for taking them up. As they were rarely paid, however, many students preferred to work for local catering services instead which meant only few gained such additional insights

beyond those provided in school. Students also often pointed out that the number of placements they could choose from was very restricted within the region. They described that it was relatively easy to find something in a kindergarten or at local shops. To get a placement for occupations like midwifery or in a solicitor's office, however, was much harder. There were only few or no opportunities within their own town and getting to the next biggest was often difficult due to poor public transport. Only few students reported that their parents drove them or that they could stay with relatives during the time of the placement. The majority of students ended up with placements in a local business, even if they were not really interested in it.

The likelihood of finding additional work-placements of interest - which often meant beyond the direct local environment - seemed to depend highly on parents' engagement to help their children and on the personal connections the family had within the region as the following quotes imply:

Miriam (GO8G2/675)^{lxxxix}: I will do it [work-placement] next year during the holidays (...) Well, I will go into accountancy (...) when I am with my mum in [Name of town] for two weeks.

Luise (P8G2/215)^{xc}: Well, a friend of my mum, she is living in [name of town] and she works there [in a solicitor's office]. And she also said that I could do a work placement there.

Personal connections thus offered a way to overcome the disadvantage of a highly restricted local job-market and the poor transport situation. Students without such parental or familial support, however, were severely disadvantaged. These findings indicate the importance of institutional support to develop structures that offer more equal opportunities for students to improve their situation through additional qualifications. Although school-organised work-

placements and the introduction of Berufsfrühförderung (BfO) already address this need, it seems that more has to be done to support young people in getting access to additional qualifications.

Further research needs to elaborate which (institutional) structures could be developed to improve connections between young people and the local as well as regional and national economy. This should include a discussion about the role young people can play in evaluating, building up and maintaining a network for knowledge exchange.

These questions are far from unique to the East German context, and rather represent one of the key issues that need to be addressed in rural areas more generally to enhance young people's chances in the local and regional job market. In addition, political initiatives are already aiming to address exactly this issue in promoting local networks within rural East German communities such as the Berufsfrühorientierung. However, considering the strong image young people had of still existing East-West German differences, it can be assumed that local networks are not perceived as a key dimension by community members to prepare their children for their future careers. Participants often referred to what their parents had told them and which advice they had given their children. These descriptions reflected an understanding of both parents and young people that the West represented the future for the younger generation, while the eastern part of Germany was perceived as lagging behind modern times. Further research is needed to analyse parents' understanding of their children's future lives in rural East Germany. An improvement of local and even regional networks would be very unlikely, however, if young people's future is perceived as a 'western' future.

I have already highlighted the risk that young people might be educated out of their East German environment. The understanding of the West representing the future for the younger generations clearly increases this risk as it could mean that young people are not addressed and involved as future community members but are prepared for their lives in the capitalist West. This could make it even more difficult for those young people who do wish to stay or do not manage to leave the region to establish them within the local/regional job market. Considering that mainly those young people with higher educational backgrounds have been moving out of rural East Germany over the last years, it indicates that those who are already disadvantaged might even experience further exclusion.

Young people perceived participation in the research project as a way to get additional qualifications and thus to improve their job opportunities. The project was designed to be participatory and to be beneficial for participants. Students were therefore offered a certificate (in English and German) that acknowledged their engagement in the project and described the skills they had learned. Participants showed a high interest in getting these certificates which they could attach to their job applications. In addition, participants valued the training in research skills as developing personal skills that were perceived as needed to succeed in job interviews for example. This found its expression in a number of situations during the research process. Anna (15) and Robert (16), for example, were doing some teamwork related to training in research methods. This training took place during our second meeting. Robert suggested that he could videotape Anna's attempt to interview so that they could analyse it together afterwards. Anna, however, did not want to be filmed and said she would feel very uncomfortable and would not know what to say when other

people are watching her. While Robert did not further insist on filming her, he responded:

Robert (Interview training)xc: Well OK, we don't have to, but I think this is pretty good training for future job-interviews. I think we can't start training for this early enough, don't you think? And here we get pretty good feedback as well.

Participation in the research was thus seen as a way to improve personal skills that were highly valuable for future careers²⁰.

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to give an insight into the dimension which participants identified as the one they were mostly concerned about: the negotiation of rural work. Analysing how participants perceived and experienced their personal opportunities and restrictions with regard to their transition into the job market it could be shown that they often found multiple ways to address and challenge perceived disadvantages. As already indicated in Chapter 5 participants identified the lack of vocational training and job opportunities within the region as the outcome of the post-socialist transformation process and thus as a general, spatial disadvantage that still affected people's lives in East Germany. However, although young people referred to this structural disadvantage they described the risk of unemployment as a personal risk which they had to overcome individually. Their understanding of new emerging opportunities corresponds with Beck's (2000) description that structural forms of

²⁰ At these early stages of the research project Anna did not want to be filmed or to interview other people. However, at the end of the project she did the main work for a video project on their everyday lives within which she interviewed several adults and other peers on different topics. It means that she got much more confident during the research process and enjoyed practising the new skills she developed during the three months of research-participation.

exclusion are collectively individualised (see also Furlong and Cartmel 1997) as participants particularly highlighted the importance of personal motivation and qualifications to benefit from new emerging opportunities.

While highlighting these new opportunities participants also expressed a high level of concern with regard to their future training and job opportunities in the region. The majority of participants rated their chances within the region as moderate or bad which often was a reflection on their everyday experiences of the difficulties of accessing the local and regional job market. This had a major impact on the strategies participants developed to improve their future prospects.

In line with other research findings on young people's perceptions in modern industrialised countries (see Furlong and Cartmel 1997; Deutsche Shell 2002; Evans 2002; Deutsche Shell 2006) it could be shown that participants valued education as one of the key dimension influencing their future career. Analysing how young people prepared themselves for the future job market it could be shown, however, that their everyday experiences sometimes contradicted these general understandings. The ways in which young people responded to these experiences were manifold and sometimes even resulted in forms of 'negative assimilations strategies' (see also Müller 2001). These forms of educational under-achievement, however, might restrict their future opportunities. With Evans (2002: 265) I argue thus that "if policies and interventions are to be made effective, we need to sharpen our awareness of the interplay of structural forces and individual's attempts to control their lives".

Here it became important, that participants tended to interpret the conditions of the local job market as being characteristic for the East German job market. This understanding of still existing fundamental East-West German

differences seemed to override rural-urban differences (see also analysis Chapter 5). It was reflected in young people's perception that migration towards the West would help them overcome this disadvantage. It often meant that those participants who could envision leaving their region, who had the financial means and educational qualification were mainly focused on their chances in the West German job market. Those with moderate educational qualifications or financial means also revealed an orientation towards the West although they tried to develop strategies that would enhance their chances within the region as well.

Analysing how young people prepared themselves for the job market it became clear that they perceived the access to additional information as crucial. However, participants clearly highlighted that institutionalised services such as the job centre did not provide them to develop innovative and individualised strategies and that they were often dependent on a small number of adult gate-keepers to get access to information. It supports research findings on young people's lives in rural areas which has highlighted the lack of efficient guidance and advice for rural youths (see Shucksmith 2004; Lindsay et al. 2005). This problem of inadequate, unqualified and insufficient advice for rural youth needs to be taken more seriously to decrease disadvantages of rural residency more generally. In this context further research is needed on the effectiveness of the governmental initiative of Berufsfrühorientierung which was introduced in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in 1998. It could be shown that the introduction of social workers in schools were highly valued by participants as it often meant that they had access to at least one adult person in the community who they could turn to for advice and who was neither teacher nor parent. Until now, however, the effectiveness of BfO has not been evaluated and it would be

important to include young people in the evaluation to identify areas and ways of improvement with those who are mostly affected.

It could further be shown that some young people developed their own strategies to improve their access to information using the internet, individual initiatives and family networks. The ability to develop such strategies, however, depended on gender, age, financial resources and educational qualification indicating that inequalities amongst young people were often reproduced. In addition, parental support often played a significant role in the development of such strategies. Considering, however, that parents might have experienced the disqualification of their own educational qualifications in the course of reunification (Müller 2001) and that job opportunities are only seen as *western* opportunities it should be questioned whether young people get sufficient support to prepare themselves in the best possible way for the transition from school to work. Further research on parental perceptions of how to prepare their children for this transition could give valuable insights into the level of support young people get.

Chapters 5 and 6 have explored the dimension of young people's negotiation of rural knowledge, social relations (including political arenas) and rural work. It could be shown which implications these negotiations have on young people's geographies. In the focus group discussion an additional dimension became important which does not easily fit in any of the previous dimensions. It addresses the multiple ways in which participants described their future lives. While I have already referred to some aspects of participants' future lives with regard to, for example, migration intentions it became clear that these images do not only mirror participant's everyday experiences. The more participants discussed their ideas of the future it rather became clear that these

images form an integral part of their present day lives. It highlighted the dialectical relationship between present day experiences and future aims. Again, the images young people developed varied immensely between them and might offer an additional insight into the complexity of their everyday lives as well as into the interplay between structural disadvantages and young people's agency. To give an insight into these future images and to discuss their potential of gaining a better understanding of the heterogeneity of young people's everyday lives the following chapter will give an analysis of these future images.

CHAPTER 7

Young people's images of their own future lives

7. Introduction

Empirical and theoretical work on young people's lives in second modernity has highlighted, that young people's competencies and skills play an important role with regard to their future lives (see Furlong & Cartmel 1997; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Valentine 2003; Hörschelmann & Schäfer 2005, 2007). This is in line with the assumption that the 'modern child' or the 'winner of second modernity' needs to be equipped with a specific set of skills and competencies (see Hannerz 1990; Büchner et al. 1996; Fuhs 1996; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2002). It has already been shown that some participants seemed to be more advantaged than others and that these unequal opportunities were often distributed along dimensions such as gender, age and social background. In addition, however, it became apparent that participants' understanding of what was possible to achieve or how they might be restricted was further closely connected with their understanding of the East-West German relationship. The latter reflected partly on young people's understanding of the socialist past and the post-socialist transformation process. At the same time it included their understanding of present day and (imagined) future living conditions. It could already been shown that participants' everyday experiences had an impact on, for example, their future migration plans. While I had planned to include questions about young people's understanding of their own future lives in the focus group discussions to analyse

them as an expression of or reflexions on their life experiences this dimension of future images became more and more important in the course of the study. These images did not only mirror their present day lives but further impacted on their decision making processes, the development of strategies to achieve desired future aims and the ways how participants made sense of their everyday lives. In addition, participants perceived their future options, chances and dreams very differently.

In this chapter these connections between past, present and (imagined) future lives which do not easily fit in Panelli's (2002) dimensions of negotiation will be analysed. I argue that these future images need to be taken into account to analyse the power-relations which characterise young people's everyday lives. This chapter thus addresses the aim of giving a deeper insight into participants' understanding of their everyday lives and the interplay between structural forms of disadvantage and young people's agency. It aims to offering a more complex understanding of who suffers or benefits more from new risks and uncertainties in second modernity.

The following sections will focus on the different understandings participants developed with regard to their future lives which they discussed in depth in the focus group discussions. Following the understanding that young people constitute their identities through spatial and bodily performances (see Kenworthy Teather 1990; Hyams 2003; Hörschelmann & Schäfer 2005), participants were further asked to draw mental maps of persons, places, hobbies and spaces which were important to them and/or which played an important role in their lives to get additional insights into their everyday geographies (see Chapter 4). In addition to data from the focus group discussions these mental maps were analysed with regard to participants'

everyday (and future) geographies. The analysis highlighted two main dimensions of young people's future images: their *migration intentions* including the fears and hopes connected with these as well as young people's understanding whether and how they can *improve* their opportunities and thus their future lives. These two dimensions are highly interlinked. Before analysing young people's future images, however, I will give an overview of previous research findings on young people's understanding of their future in (rural) East Germany to contextualise my own research findings.

7.1 Young people's imagined futures in (rural) East Germany – previous research

Comparative research on East and West German youth indicates that young East Germans are more likely to perceive their future as bleak (Brake 1996; Brake & Büchner 1996; Werz 2001) and are much more pessimistic about their future prospects (Brake 1996) as they have experienced more dramatic changes than their western counterparts (see also Chapter 1). With regard to young people's experiences of the transformation process, Förster (2003) has highlighted, for example, that 94% of people in the former GDR believed in a secure future in 1989. After the political caesura in 1990, however, this optimistic perception decreased in East Germany. It meant that in 1994 only 60% of East Germans were still confident of their future prospects. This number went further down to 28% in 1998 (Förster 2003). These findings were confirmed by the Shell youth studies (Deutsche Shell 2002, 2006) which refer to an increasing gap between East and West German youths with regard to their perception of their personal options. This indicates that people in the eastern

part of unified Germany are generally more sceptical and pessimistic about their future prospects than their western counterparts.

Research has further shown that values and norms developed in the socialist past, as well as with regard to transformation processes, seem to continue to be relevant for how people experience and interpret present conditions (see Chapter 2). It strengthens the hypothesis that East German youths are still facing additional disadvantages which affect their perception of personal limits and opportunities as well as their socio-spatial identity construction. In this context rural young people living in East Germany are still referred to as the 'losers' of reunification (see Brake 1996; Brake and Büchner 1996; Baur and Burrmann 2000; Kollmorgen 2003). Förster (2003) has in this context argued that people's identification with the GDR is still increasing.

Analysing differences between East and West German youths, Kötters et al. (1996) also found that East German young people were more likely to have developed clear plans for the future with regard to family planning and career than West German youths. They showed that processes of modernisation were very different in East and West Germany, indicating that young people in the eastern part were likely to follow more standardised biographies. West Germans youths, however, were more likely to develop an individualised biography which corresponds with Beck's and Giddens' descriptions of self-reflective individuals. Kötters et al. (1996) thus argue that modernisation processes are much more distinct in the western German part. One could conclude that West German youths are better equipped to perform successfully in an increasingly individualised, highly unstable and mobile world. East German youths, on the other hand, seem to be less prepared to 'survive the rat race' (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2002) as they follow more standardised and

thus less flexible pathways. Research on young people's lives in post-socialist Serbia (Tomanovic & Ignjatovic 2006) seems to confirm such findings highlighting that individualisation processes are hindered due to a number of structural and cultural factors.

In contrast, however, the sociologist Engler (2002) discussed the East Germans as the German avant-garde, as it had been essential in the socialist GDR to develop highly flexible and creative working patterns. According to Engler, East Germans had to develop multiple strategies to cope with new uncertainties due to the experiences of dramatic changes in the reunification process. East Germans are thus well equipped to cope with the new risks and benefit from new opportunities which characterise second modernity as they have learned to be highly flexible and mobile and to cope with an increasingly changing world. In line with this, Wilson and Klages (2001) have shown with regard to farm restructuring processes that new farm structures have emerged in East Germany since reunification in 1990. These structures have the potential, according to Wilson and Klages (*ibid.*), to be highly successful within Germany and Europe. One reason for this is the highly flexible management of farm partnerships which have been developed in the transformation process.

Previous research has thus provided different ways of interpreting the impact of post-socialist transformation process on (young) people's everyday lives. In the following sections it will be analysed how participants translated their everyday experiences in understandings of their own future lives.

7.2 Young people's imagined futures – empirical findings

The following sections will give an insight into participants' understanding of their future prospects. It will be shown that their imagined futures varied immensely amongst them which questions the over-simplified explanations discussed above. Nonetheless, some major differences between the types of images which participants developed occurred allowing the development of a typology of imagined futures. Further, connections between the different types of imagined futures and dimensions such as age, gender and educational level are made, as these seemed to impact on young people's everyday experiences and the way they envisioned their future lives. The typology aims to capture the range of futures participants' developed and to gain a better understanding of the inter play between structural effects and young people's agency.

7.2.1 Young people's imagined future 1: The future is mine

Although the majority of participants shared the understanding that new – but spatially distributed – opportunities had emerged with reunification, major differences became apparent regarding their perception of personal future options and limits and the strategies they developed (aiming) to improve their future prospects. The differences between the drafted futures often seemed to be connected with the educational level they were aiming for, their travel experiences, their general interest in, for example, other cultures and places as well as their personal skills and perceptions of their own abilities. It seemed that students from the Gymnasium in particular (but not exclusively), and thus those

aiming for the highest educational achievement, translated the understanding of still existent East-West German differences into a clear motivation of migrating to the 'West', mainly referring to the western part of unified Germany. For a few, however, this also included other western countries in Europe. This small group of young people represents those who were the most optimistic and confident with regard to their future options. They showed the highest flexibility and openness and perceived the future as offering endless opportunities. The future images which this small group of young people developed will be introduced below.

7.2.1.1 Young people's imagined future 1a: The future is mine – everything is possible

Participants who developed this type of future images were often particularly interested in other cultures and languages and had already travelled to other countries or were planning to do so in near future. For them the idea of living somewhere beyond the national boundaries represented an act of personal choice and they integrated these future options already in their present day lives. To get a better insight into the spatial range of their present day lives I will introduce the mental maps (see Figure 7.1 and 7.2) of two participants who developed this type of imagined futures.

Amelie (Figure 7.1) had just moved to the area. Her father was a professional soldier and always had to stay in one place for around three years before moving on. It meant that Amelie was used to moving on a frequent basis and to adapting to new places. Her life was thus characterised by a high level of mobility although she was now living with her mother only. Her house formed

the centre of the image from which a number of arrows indicated places or people that were important to her. In the top right corner she had put all her former friends as well as her father who were living around 150km away.

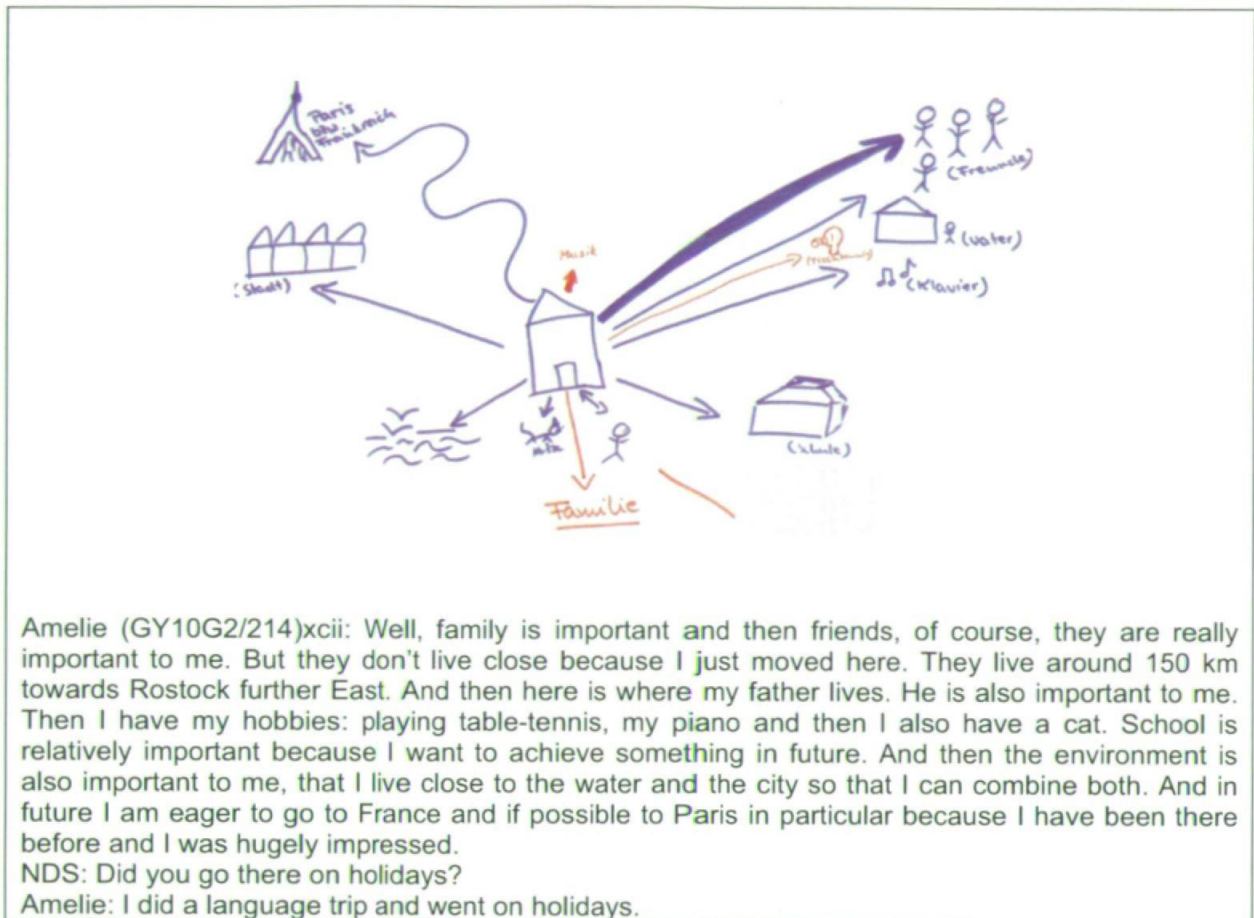


Figure 7.1: Example of mental map (future image type 1a)

(Source: Mental map drawn by participant and included with their permission)

Amelie highlighted the importance of family and friends and described a lively contact to them which indicates the development of a strong social network. In addition, she highlighted the importance of school referring to the importance of a good education to build up a future career. This understanding was shared by all young people who developed this type of future image.

Amelie had included the Eiffel Tower in her picture, symbolising that she was hoping to visit or even live in France - particularly in Paris - in future as she had been there on a language trip. In the focus group discussion, Amelie

explained that she loved speaking French and learning about the French culture. Her travel experience had left a strong impression and she was eager to see and learn more about the French way of life.

Amelie represented the *only* student of all participants who reported that she had ever been on such educational trip. Attending a language school thus did not seem to be a common way for young people to spend their holidays. Language trips can be seen as a form of additional qualification and the chance for young people to gain such additional forms of education often depended on parents' financial resources and their willingness to invest into their children. It became clear in the focus group discussions that only a few students referred to having travelled abroad. They were mainly students from the Gymnasium who were more likely to describe their parents as financially better off than other students. The majority of participants, however, had either no or only limited travel experience (mainly within the region) or was used to spending their holidays with relatives in, for example, West Germany. It indicates that young people's travel experiences varied immensely. Considering, that travel experiences may help young people to develop intercultural skills it can be assumed that these young people might benefit from acquiring these skills in a society that increasingly demands flexibility and mobility (Hörschelmann & Schäfer 2007). It highlights that the development of such intercultural skills was distributed highly unevenly amongst the participants (see also Valentine & McKendrick 1997; Deforges 1998; Shucksmith 2004; Hörschelmann & Schäfer 2005, 2007).

Young people who referred to this understanding of their own future often referred to a high level of parental support as well as sufficient financial resources to gain such experiences. It highlights the importance of informal

networks of social support (see also Lindsay et al. 2005; Bjarnason & Thorlindsson 2006) and of young people's social background for the development of additional skills (see also Chapter 2).

Similar to Amelie, Tanja (see Figure 7.2) also referred to the importance of personal relationships although their friends often seemed to live in very different places. It might indicate that spatial distance was not perceived as key dimension that affected the possibility to developing and maintaining friendships.

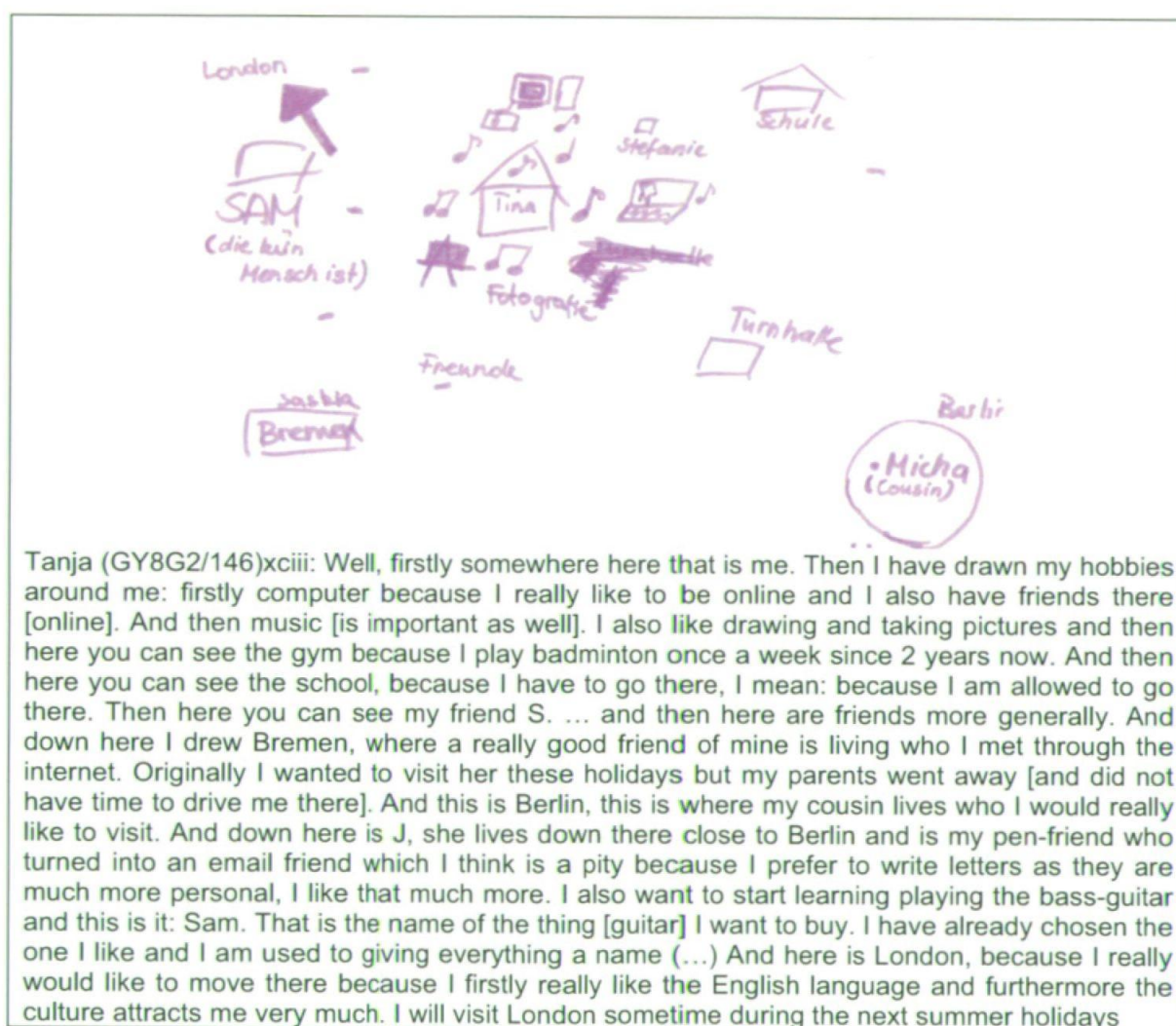


Figure 7.2: Example of mental map (future image type 1a)

(Source: Mental map drawn by participants and included with their permission)

These young people seemed to find their own ways to build up their own social networks even beyond their local communities. Tanja, for example, referred to the internet as an integral part of her everyday live activities which allowed her to develop relationships even beyond the rural community. She referred to two particular friends with which she was emailing/chatting frequently, one of which she had met online and who was living more than 300km away.

Tanja's example demonstrates that some young people found ways to build up strong social networks that reached far beyond their local and even regional environment. The ability of finding ways to actively create their own social networks requires high communication skills as well as a high openness and interest towards people and places beyond the local environment. This competence can be seen as a personal ability that increases young people's experiences, their knowledge and skills which might prepare them better for future uncertainties.

Similar to Amelie, Tanja also included a European capital (London) in her mental map. Tanja described that she loved the English language and that she was watching CNN news every day to become more fluent in English. Up to now she did not have the money to visit London but had asked her parents for a trip to London as a present. She had already bought a travel book for London and read about the city and English culture. The dream of living in London in future thus already strongly affected her everyday live.

With regard to young people's perception of their future lives in urban East Germany Hörschelmann and Schäfer (2005: 234) have described this inclusion of national and even international spaces into young people's spatial range as "an integration of present and future local/global places through

spatially embodied cultural practices". In the rural context, it means that these young people's interests, their travel experiences and lifestyles enabled them to challenge rural disadvantages by bridging the different spatial dimensions of the local and national if not international/global. They have already started to develop their own social networks and have their own ideas of their future lives and have acquired or are about to acquire intercultural skills which they might profit from in future and which might open up new opportunities for them. Further, they demonstrated that they can develop strategies that help them realise their dreams. Tanja, for example, was going to make her first trip to London in the near future. Such experiences might equip them with a confidence in their own competencies and with abilities that they can adapt to unknown situations, countries and cultures.

These young people thus showed the tendency of including national and international/global spaces into their everyday life activities and already started to include this extended spatial range into their plans for the future. It means that they developed their (future) biographies within this widened spatial framework. Their everyday lives already demonstrated a high level of flexibility and mobility, dimensions which are often understood as becoming increasingly important to prepare oneself for life in second modernity (Büchner 1995; Büchner et al. 1996; Fuhs 1996; Furlong & Cartmel 1997; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2002). This also found its expression in the way they pictured their professional future lives emphasising that the main aspect was personal fulfilment, freedom and choice. Tanja, for example described that although she was not sure which profession she wanted to learn she knew exactly what she did not want to become.

Tanja (GY8G3/67)xciv: I don't know what I want to be. I mean, I know what I don't want to do but not exactly what I want to do. Well, for sure I don't want to do anything that has a routine or is dull where you do the same every day. Where you have to fill out forms or something like that. I definitely don't want to do that. I rather prefer something where I can make a contribution myself and where nobody dictates me what to do. I rather want to do something where I can have a say.

Other young people referred to a number of pathways which they could imagine for themselves and easily elaborated in detail what they would need to do to reach their aims. Anna, for example, referred to a number of professions she liked: she saw herself as a designer, as a doctor, as an actress or even a hairdresser. She demonstrated an in-depth knowledge about the requirements, skills and qualifications needed to successfully establish herself in these professions. It furthermore seemed that she was able to see herself working in each of these professions and switching between these very different settings and situations. Anna thus easily developed multiple future plans for herself. It indicates a high confidence in her abilities and future as well as a high level of flexibility and openness. In the focus group discussion she explained, for example, how her life would look like if she decided to become a doctor.

Anna (GY8G3/81)xcv: Well, firstly I become a nurse. Then I go to West-Berlin or so – definitely to a big city, and then I will do night shifts or work in the evenings in the hospital so that I earn some money. It would be best to do that in the hand surgery so that I know everybody already because during my studies I will have to do an internship there. And then I can do it in the hand surgery because that is what interests me somehow and well, then I would do my PhD and then become professor (laughs) and then I might already be 35 years old. Otherwise I will become an actress.

Participants who developed this type of highly flexible future images can be described as young people who made use of the new opportunities that had emerged with reunification such as freedom of travel and individual choice. The

way they created their own biographies and challenged spatial disadvantages corresponds with the self-reflexive individualisation processes described by Beck, Beck-Gernsheim and Giddens. That they showed a high interest in engaging with other people, places and cultures furthermore can be described as a cosmopolitan competence which Hannerz (1990, p. 239) described as a "a) state of readiness, a personal ability to make one's way into other cultures, b) cultural competence: a built-up skill in manoeuvring expertly with a particular system of meanings and meaningful forms". Hannerz argued that the decontextualised knowledge of cosmopolitans can be easily recontextualised which allows them to easily perform in a number of different settings and thus allows them more easily to adapt to new situations.

It would be far too simple, however, to conclude that they thus represent the 'winners of second modernity'. This would neglect the multiple power relations that affect young people's everyday lives and that produce unequal opportunities and forms of structural exclusion and marginalisation. Young people's rural residency, for example, did affect the range of services available to young people locally and thus their opportunities to gain and develop a wide range of competencies and skills. Urban youths might thus have more opportunities to develop a cosmopolitan lifestyle (such as language and dance schools, much more extensive experiences with foreigners in their own city and so on see Hörschelmann & Schäfer 2005). The level of competences and skills that young people *are able* to develop seems to be highly dependent on the context they are growing up in. It is thus necessary to understand young people's future images in the context of their everyday lives, including both young people's agency as well as structural forms of exclusion and inequality in the context of rural East Germany.

While the multiple forms in which young people negotiate and create their own spaces have been elaborated – including imagined spaces such as their own future lives – it also became clear that participants' perceptions and experiences are highly affected by multiple forms of power relations such as, for example, power relations amongst young people (as discussed in Chapter 5, see also Schäfer & Yarwood 2008).

I want to highlight that not all young people who wished to live in another country for a specific period of time showed the high level of flexibility demonstrated in Tanja's and Amelie's example. It rather became clear that mobility or imagined mobility was not always a sign for high flexibility or connected with the aim of gaining intercultural skills. In the following section I want to describe the small group of young people who developed this – slightly different – type of future images.

7.2.1.2 Young people's imagined future 1b: The future is mine –I will find my own way

Although young people who developed this type of future images included places far beyond their local environment in their understandings of and wishes for the future they differed in many ways from those young people which have been previously described. I want to refer here to two examples. The first is Thomas, a 10th grade student from the Gymnasium. In a focus group discussion, he passionately described that he would like to participate in a student exchange programme preferably with a student from New Zealand. He thought it was very 'cool' to go there for a while particularly because 'Lord of the

Rings' was filmed there. However, being asked if Thomas could imagine living in another country, he clearly distanced himself from this idea:

Thomas (GY10G2/248)xcvi: I would like to participate in a student exchange programme [lasting 6 to 12 months] to New Zealand.

NDS: And why do you want to go particularly to New Zealand?

Thomas: Well, because in US America you never know when somebody will shoot you dead. And New Zealand is supposed to have beautiful scenery.

NDS: Can you picture yourself living there?

Thomas: No way! I can't even speak the language and stuff. No. And they have completely different attitudes and living conditions. I think we have more money here in Germany than they have and a much higher standard of living.

Participating in a student exchange normally means that students live with a family in, for example, New Zealand for 6 to 12 months and attend school there for that period of time. The main aims generally are to learn or improve language skills and to become familiar with the other country, the people, and their culture as well as developing individual skills. Surprisingly, Thomas did not refer to any of these aims when he expressed the wish to go on a student exchange. He had not travelled abroad before but had seen New Zealand's beautiful scenery on TV and the popularity of the movie 'Lord of the Rings' at the time of the interview might have had an impact on people's perceptions and understandings of this country. However, Thomas distanced himself clearly from the idea of living there for longer. It seemed that he felt he could never adapt to another language and culture and expressed that he did not want to give up the German standard of living in the long term.

Thomas' response to the question why he wanted to go to New Zealand in particular indicated that his perception of other countries and places was highly stereotypical. Although he expressed that he would love to go to New

Zealand for a while, it did not mean that he showed a particular interest in the culture, the language or the people. This is in line with findings by Hörschelmann and Schäfer (2007) which showed that young people's consumption of media programmes such as documentaries about foreign countries as well as their travel experiences and desires to travel abroad do not necessarily lead to a more differentiated view.

Another example that travel or migration intention did not always ultimately indicate high flexibility, but could rather hinder the development of alternative futures was Patrick's case (see Figure 7.3). Patrick was also a 10th grade student from the Gymnasium and made it very clear that he would emigrate as soon as he had finished his vocational training. Although he attained the Gymnasium he wanted to leave school after grade 10 (and thus not attain the Abitur) to do an apprenticeship to become a shepherd, as shepherds, according to Patrick, were always needed in New Zealand.

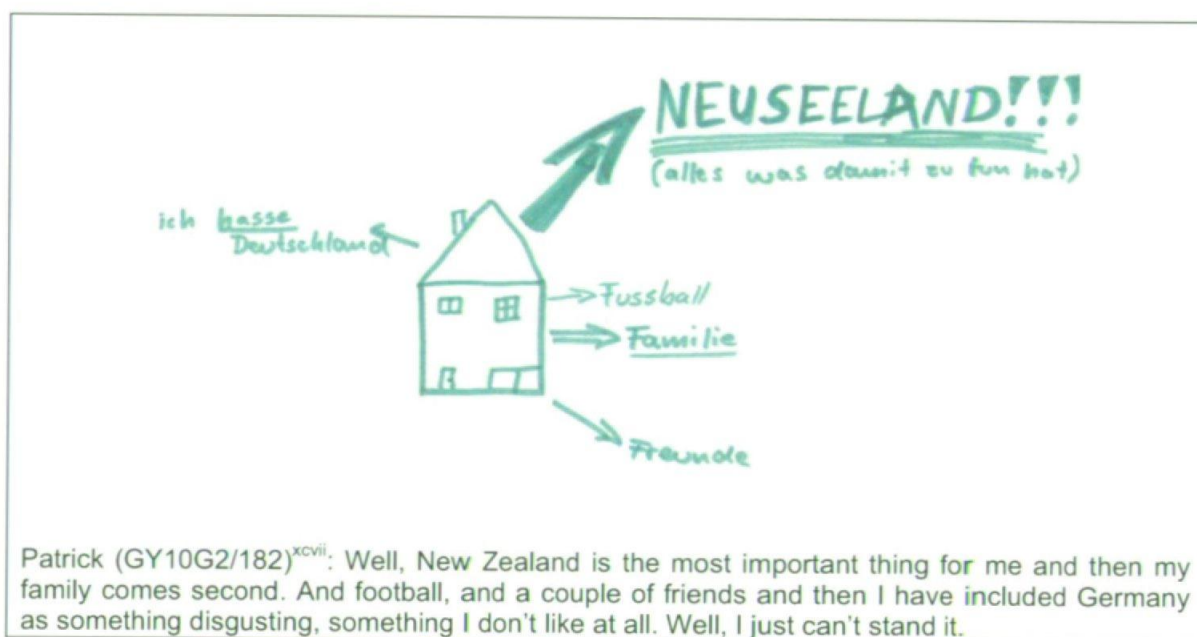


Figure 7.3: Example of mental map (future image type 1b)
(Source: Mental map drawn by participant and included with their permission)

Patrick's mental map indicates that New Zealand already formed an important part of his everyday life as he already prepared himself for the emigration. New Zealand and 'everything that is connected with it' [alles, was damit zu tun hat] was important to him and he expressed the significance of this emigration plan by using three exclamation marks and capitalisation of the word. Patrick described that he had already read everything he could find about New Zealand and watched every movie and documentary on TV. He also added, that he had an antipathy against Germany emphasising that he really hated it [ich hasse Deutschland]. He did not refer to a wide range of hobbies (only: playing football) or to education as an important dimension to develop his future life as he wanted to become a shepherd for which he did not need the Abitur. Family and friends seemed to be much less important than his dream to live in New Zealand. It seemed that his present day life was already centred on his future and that he did not spend much time and effort in building up an extensive social network locally.

I asked Patrick, why he felt such antipathy against Germany. Patrick referred to people's general attitudes and mentalities which he did not want to cope with any more:

NDS (GY10G3/209)xcviii: Why do you have such an antipathy against Germany?

Patrick: Well, first of all because of people's attitude here. They think they know-it-all and combine all bad characteristics, the Germans. And secondly, I dislike the politics. With regard to the landscape it is actually OK.

NDS: And what is your main criticism?

Patrick: Well mainly the people, they think that the right wing radicals can achieve whatever in Germany and nonsense like that. The whole division and stuff like that.

Caroline: Which division? Between East and West or what?

Patrick: Well, that people have learned [socialist norms and values] previously and that they still cling to this bollocks.

Previous to drawing the mental maps this group of young people had emphasised their lack of understanding that older generations still felt attached to their socialist past and that they perceived this sometimes as a burden to move forward. Furthermore, some members of the group had expressed their disapproval of right radical tendencies which they felt were particularly popular amongst people within the region. Patrick distanced himself from both discussed tendencies. It is interesting, however, that he stated that his motive to migrate was connected with the experience that East-West German differences were still an issue for people. It seems that he had enough of these discussions and his strategy to escape them was to leave the country for good.

Patrick's idea about his future, however, was much less open and flexible than the ones developed by Tanja and Amelie. He did not even consider that his dream of emigrating might not come true and had not developed an alternative idea of what he wanted to do in case he could not realise his dream to go to New Zealand. This inflexibility might make it more difficult for Patrick in future to cope with unexpected situations.

These examples demonstrate that some young people perceived the spatial range of their lives as not being restricted towards the local environment they were growing up in. They rather seemed to perceive local, regional and national, as well as international, spaces as accessible for them and integrated these multiple levels of space within their everyday lives. This often reflected on already gained or planned travel experiences and a development of intercultural skills. Travel experiences and migration plans, however, did not always go in hand with a more cosmopolitan lifestyle that is characterised by a high interest in other cultures and languages, high intercultural skills as well as high levels of

flexibility and openness. Furthermore young people's competencies and skills are not only dependent on their own agency but are also an expression of the general context they are growing up in.

7.2.2 Young people's imagined future 2: Building up my own career

Generally, it can be said that the majority of students from the Regionalschule as well as some students from the Gymnasium developed a quite pragmatic understanding of their future lives. Although these students often highlighted that they liked their place of residence they were prepared to move wherever they had to go to find a job.

Anika (RE10G4/218)xcix: Well, I will take what I can get. And if that is further away, well, then I go there. And if I find something here then I stay. We will see.

These young people were oriented towards the regional and national job market considering both, moving somewhere else in East Germany or even moving to the West. Although they referred to the spatial distribution of disadvantages, moving to the West was perceived as an option but not as the only way to build up their future careers. They thus were also looking for ways of gaining access to the regional market.

However, these young people often interpreted the conditions of the local job market as indicators and as being representative for the *East German* and thus for the regional job market. From this point of view the development of strategies that helped them to adopt to the local job market conditions were understood as also improving their chances – at least – regionally. In contrast to the first group of young people who believed that 'everything was possible' –

including dreams for the future such as: becoming an actress – and who were aiming for the realisation of an individual lifestyle, these participants were much more pragmatic. They described their desire for stability mainly with regard to their parents' experiences with (long-term) unemployment and bad job conditions which often affected the whole family life. Melanie, for example, pointed out that she did not want to end up like her mother, having an unqualified job in a factory not knowing how long she would be able to keep this job.

Melanie (GO10G3/1024)c: I mean I can see how it [the work] wears my mum out. She works at the assembly line and that is hard work for the people. And above all you never have a regular weekend. If they get a big order then they also have to work Saturdays. And if there needs to be more work done they have to keep packing and stay as long as it takes and work overtime. I really don't want that for myself.

Their parents' experiences thus had a strong impact on their own expectations of their future jobs. Although young people often highlighted that they wanted a job that was 'fun' they, at the same time, formulated very pragmatic expectations.

Anja GO10/G3/1080)ci: I just want to work regular hours. Monday to Saturday from 9am to 5 or 6pm and then I want to have Sunday completely off. That would be great.

Participants repeatedly highlighted that earning a lot of money was very important to them. However, this represented another expression of young people's search of stability and security. Being asked what they would do with the money they earned, it became thus clear that their demands were often surprisingly moderate.

Melanie (GO10G2/1986)cii: Money is important but it doesn't have to be loads of it, I mean, I don't have to be rolling in money but I want to be able to afford some things and to put a bit of money aside each month so that I can save some money. Or in case I live away from home then I want to be able to have enough money to visit my family, to take the bus or train or whatever. It is like a self-protection but I don't have to rely on it [the money] because then one gets stuck-up and arrogant because you think you can do everything.

The wish to earn good money was thus often an expression of the aim to have a stable income which allowed young people to cover the basic living costs and the travel expenses to visit their families as well as to save for some extras. Having too much money, however, was often understood as ruining one's character. Here, participants often referred to West Germans as an example. These young people were thus striving for a life that offered them stability and security and hopefully some fun and the option to further their knowledge and skills. It meant that they were primarily aiming for a secure job which guaranteed regular working hours and income.

Most participants were developing this type of future image. It was possible, however, to further distinguish between two forms of this future image: the first captures those young people who progressively and actively planned their future lives and who were often challenging and negotiating their everyday options. The majority of young people, however, developed the second version of this pragmatic future image which can be described by a much more reactive and thus less active attitude. Both versions of this type of pragmatic future image will be described in more detail below.

7.2.2.1 Young people's imagined future 2a: Progressively building one's future

The participants who developed this image of their future life frequently referred to personal contacts and experiences beyond the local environment. These were mainly connected with visiting family members and friends who were living in other parts of the country, as well as with travel experiences to other places in the region due to, for example, their hobbies. The spatial range of their everyday lives was thus mainly centred on local and regional spaces but also included links to places and people at the national level. Hardly any of these participants, however, had experiences, connections or ambitions beyond the national boundaries. With regard to their imagined future they hardly referred to the desire to visit or move to other countries which distinguishes them clearly from those imagined futures that have already been introduced.

It became clear, however, that this group of young people was highly active in developing and maintaining local as well as regional friendship networks. They often referred to structured leisure activities and frequently travelled to other towns or cities to meet friends or practice their favourite sports and so on. Rebeka (Regionalschule, 16 years old), for example, described that she often visited her friends in nearby villages, towns and cities. Her mental map (see Figure 7.4) gives a good insight into this regionally oriented spatial dimension of her everyday life and represents the type of future image this group of young people developed.

holidays to gain experience and build up some contacts in this field as well as within the local area. This again indicates that this type of young people was often actively looking for ways to develop their own future careers by improving their options of getting access to the local/regional job market through, for example, finding their own work placements. The ideas these young people developed of their future lives often reflected on the local and regional job opportunities and showed a high level of pragmatism.

It was this group of young people who developed the most active strategies to improve their future job chances mainly including female participants from the Gymnasium and the Regionalschule (see also Chapter 6). They showed similar levels of flexibility as the first group of young people but took a much more pragmatic approach. Further, they did not show the same level of intercultural openness than those who developed future images 1. However, Rebeka's drawing of a piece symbol which she labelled in English 'Peace all over the world' and described as her personal belief indicated how fluent the boundaries between the different future images were.

7.2.2.2 Young people's imagined future 2b: Re-actively building ones career

The second group of pragmatically oriented students shared the hopes and fears of their counterparts. However, they were much less active in developing strategies to overcome experienced disadvantages or perceived restrictions. It also became apparent that the spatial range of their everyday lives was much more limited than of those introduced above. Representative for this type of mental maps, I want to introduce Annika's drawing (Figure 7.5) of her everyday spaces.

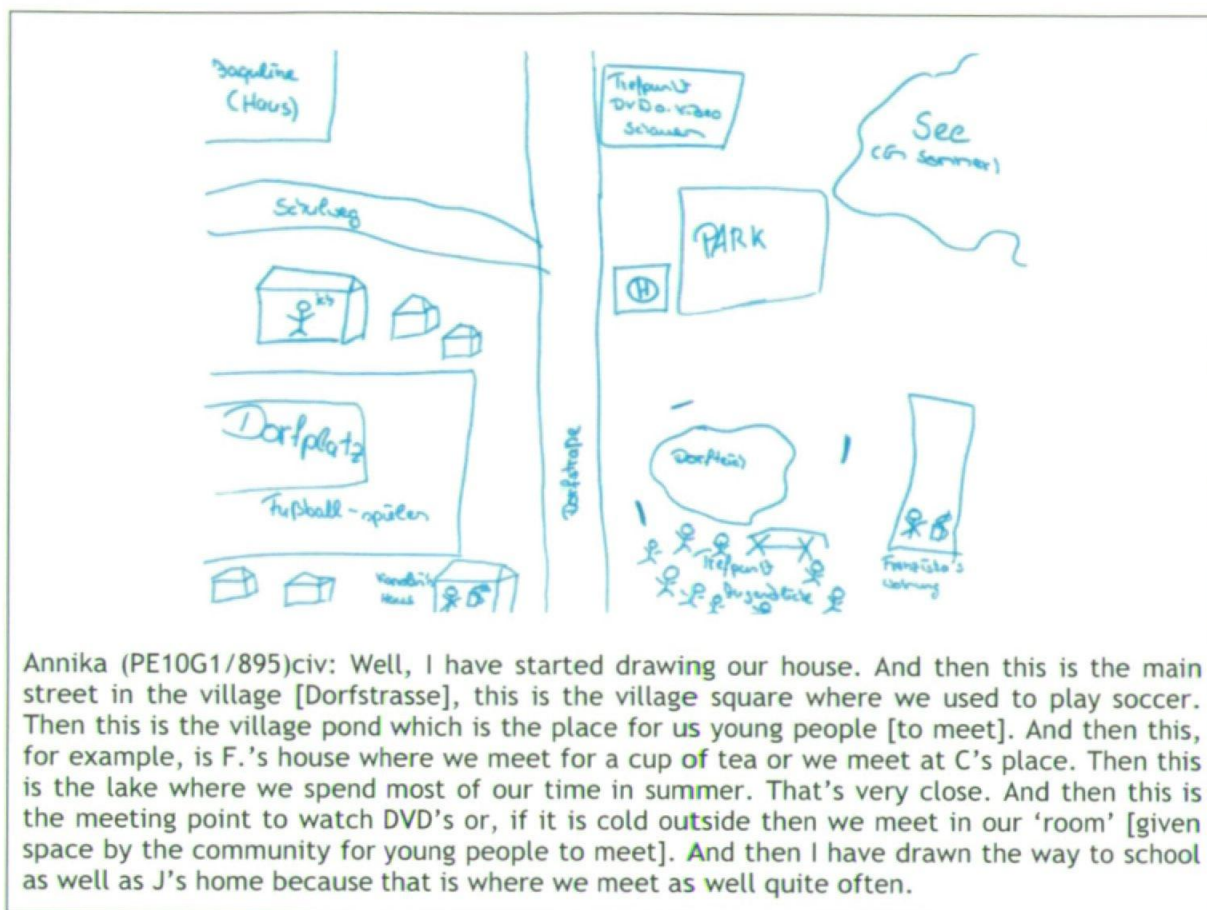


Figure 7.5: Example of mental map (future image type 2b)
(Source: Mental map drawn by participant and included with their permission)

In comparison with the mental maps of the previous students it becomes clear that the everyday activities of this group of young people were mainly focused around their local environment. Besides public places such as the village square [Dorfplatz], the local lake [See] and pond [Dorfteich], Annika included the houses of friends as well as a room given to them by the community where she and her friends regularly met. She described that only around eight young people her age were living in her village and that they normally did everything together. The places she drew thus mainly referred to meeting places of the group. The map does not include any individual characteristics that would describe Annika's interests, her dreams and fears any

further. Nor does she refer to any personal connections to places outside the local environment. This seems to indicate that the local peer group represents the main point of reference for Annika and that this group is very strongly inwards oriented (this was confirmed by drawings from other participants whose mental maps can be included in this type of future image). It indicates that peer relations played a dominant role with regard to these young people's spatial experiences. Here, conformity rather than individuality became an important aspect of young people's everyday lives which Hörschelmann and Schäfer (2005) relate to a search for security and belonging.

This group of young people, whose spatial range was limited towards the local environment, represented those who most often complained and were often poorly informed about local training and job opportunities. Knowing that education was essential to access the job market, these young people often aimed for good marks in school. Beside this, however, hardly any of them had started to gain additional qualifications outside of the work placements organised by the school. With regard to their expectations of future jobs, these young people often considered the need to move away and accepted this. Their main concern was, however, to find a job that would allow them to pay for their living.

Lena (GO10G2/1990)cv: I would like just to find a job which enables me to pay my rent every month and perhaps save some money to go on holiday or suchlike. I just want to be sure that I earn enough money to survive.

These young people seemed to have developed an attitude that can be described as re-active rather than progressive as they did not, for example, develop clear expectations of their future lives and jobs nor did they describe specific dreams for the future. They rather seemed to get on with their lives as

well as possible without putting too much additional effort into developing contacts and new skills. It has to be highlighted that these young people rarely received support from their parents to develop their own lives.

7.2.3 Young people's imagined future 3: The future is not in my hands

This group included all young people from the Förderschule and thus those who were aiming for the lowest educational level. These young people did not consider leaving their local environment. Although they sometimes referred to other cities which they would like to see or even liked to live in the idea of migration did not form part of their imagined future. Due to their low educational qualification and the often limited financial resources of their parents, these participants focused solely on the local market. The type of jobs they were dreaming of was often very closely related to their everyday lives which meant that their ideas of what they wanted to be reflected their direct experiences within the local community. Annett (14 years old), for example, described that one of her main activities was to look after the toddler of her neighbour. As she enjoyed babysitting her dream was to become a kindergarten-teacher. Similar to this, Janett (14 years old), also a Förderschule student, wanted to become a cook as she liked the cooking lessons in school (see Figure 7.6).

Their vision of their own future was very important for these students. Seeing themselves as a cook or a kindergarten teacher made them very proud and at the end of the project they wanted to take pictures of themselves which showed them and their future-job dream.



Figure 7.6: 'My dream job': photo portrait project Förderschule
(Source: Photographs taken by participants and included with their permission)

These young people hoped to get vocational training **within** the region. Their imagined futures were thus clearly locally oriented. They did not always match, however, with the educational qualification they were attaining.

This analysis of the mental maps revealed that the range of spatial practices of students from the Förderschule was highly limited and their lives strongly locally embedded. Matthias' and Annett's maps (see Figure 7.6) can be seen as representative for the types of mental maps these students drew. Both of them were 14 years old. After drawing the maps they explained to their peers what their maps showed.

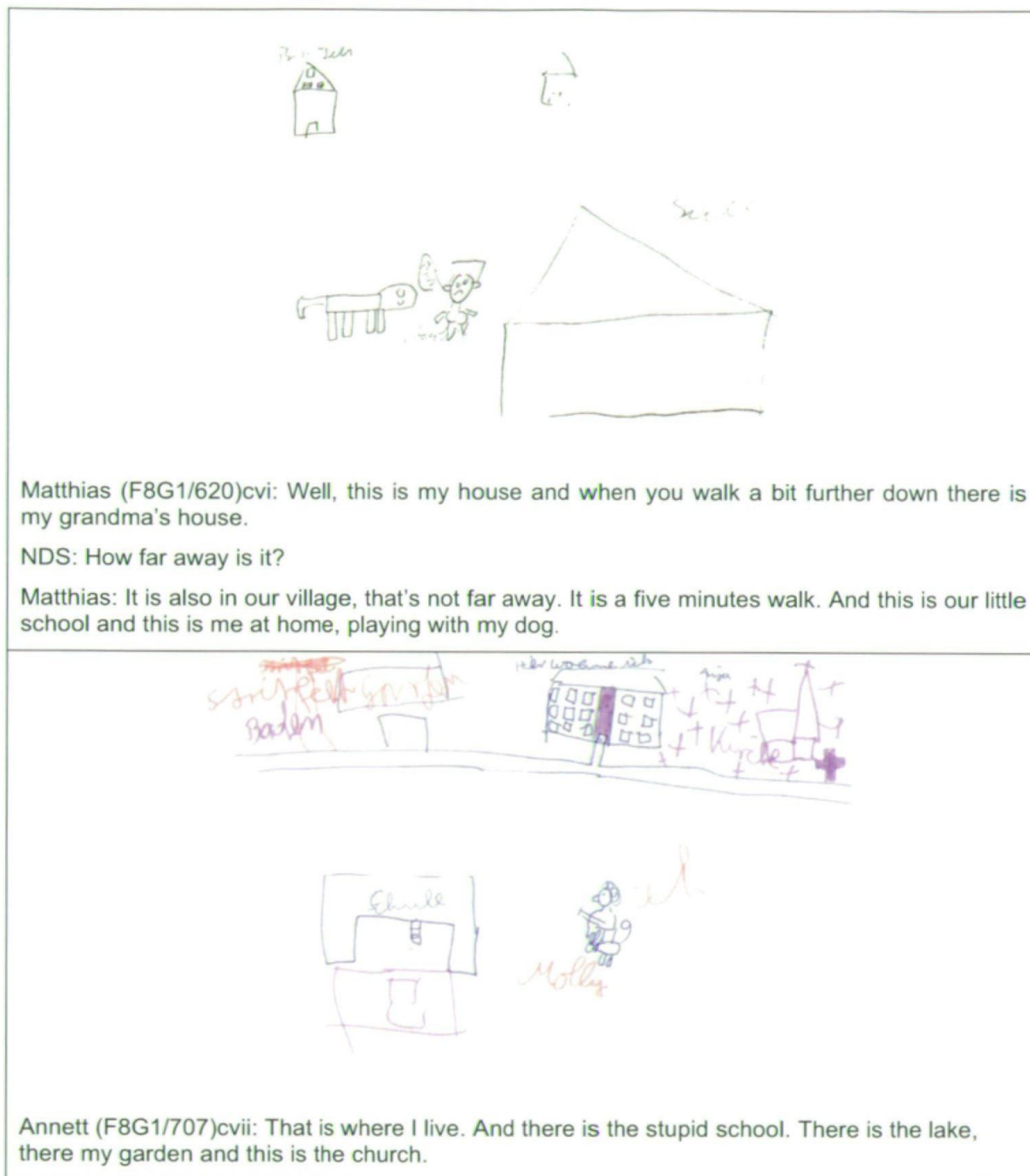


Figure 7.7: Example of mental map (future image type 3)

(Source: Mental maps drawn by participants and included with their permission)

Matthias lived in Poppentin, a small village with less than 80 inhabitants around 13 km away from Röbel where he went to school. Because his village was quite remote and not connected to a bus route the city council paid for a taxi which picked him up every day to drive him to school. In the focus group discussions, Matthias described that he had a few friends in his village and liked

playing football and play station. He also liked to help his uncle out who had a farm. Matthias had never travelled anywhere else but expressed the wish to see Berlin once as he had seen images of the Love parade, an annual techno-event in Berlin and the Berlin Dome on TV. Despite this, however, he wished to find a job locally and hoped to become a farmer to be able to work with his uncle.

Matthias' mental map refers to a highly limited range of places that characterise his everyday life. The little house in the top left corner refers to his home (Bin ich). And although he has drawn the house of his grandmother, which – according to his comments – is only a five minutes walk away, the map does not refer to friendship relations or any other activities that would give a deeper insight into more individual aspects of his everyday life. Surprisingly, the school represents by far the biggest building in the picture which according to the drawing instructions given to participants would mean that this represents the most important place for Matthias. In the focus group discussions it became clear that Matthias did not like school and wished to be able to leave as soon as possible to help his uncle on the farm. However, school still represented the space, where Matthias met up with most of his friends which explains the importance of school on his map. In addition, Matthias had drawn himself and his dog, indicating that 'I am stronger than him' (ich [bin] stärker) as he liked to play-fight with him. His dog seemed to be very important to Matthias and in the focus group discussion he often described in length how he had played with his dog and what his dog was like. It supports more recent research findings which have highlighted that pets impact on young people's well-being (see McNicholas & Collis 2005; Gabhainn & Sixsmith 2006). This seems to be particularly important for those young people who have limited opportunities to make and meet up with friends within their place of residence.

Annett was living in Walow (just under 600 inhabitants), around 16km away from Röbel. She described that she liked going for walks and looking after the 1 ½ year old toddler of a friend. There were hardly any services for young people in her hometown, which is why Annett spent most of her time in her parents' garden. The only activity she did was learning to play the tuba in a local music school. Like Matthias, Annett had never travelled abroad but had lived in Dresden up to the age of 6 where the majority of her family still lived. She had moved with her parents to Walow, however, as her father got a new job there. Although she had hardly been in contact with her family in Dresden, Annett was hoping that she could go back there one day.

Annett's mental map was very similar to Matthias' map. Like Matthias she had only drawn a small number of places as well as herself, accompanied by her dog on her map. In addition to her own house (Hier wohne ich), which was situated next to the church and graveyard of the village, she had drawn their local garden and lake where she spent lots of her time with her parents in summer (Garten, Baden). In addition, she had also drawn the school to which she had to take a bus every day. Like Matthias' map, Annett's map did not include any friendship or relative-relationships. In the focus group discussion Annett added that she was learning to play the Tuba and that she often looked after the son of a friend. Despite this, however, she did not have many friends. The spatial range of the everyday activities of both students was thus highly limited and did not include any other places outside their home village despite school. Nor did it include any indicators for their future dreams or aims.

The limited spatial range of their everyday lives as well as their limited travel experiences, and their understanding that they will stay within the local environment they were growing up in, might explain why they, in contrast to the

rest of the participants, neither discussed new chances and choices of the western job market nor referred to fundamental East-West German differences. They saw their present day and future lives as being situated in the local area which also represented the spatial range of their everyday lives and their understanding of their personal action radius.

This does not mean, however, that these young people are best prepared to stay in the region. Due to their low educational level it is rather likely that they will only find elementary or unqualified jobs. Their teacher (discussing her students' ideas of her student's future in a one-to-one interview with me) doubted that they would get anything else than an unqualified job, if they would get a job at all. These young people also often did not know how to improve their chances in the job market. None of these students referred to any strategy of gaining access to information or additional qualification other than those offered through school (which included school-placements). They also rarely referred to discussions with family members or to support given by their parents to prepare for the future. This group of students thus represented the most passive ones regarding their future careers. They were hoping to get a job but they did not seem to feel that they could do anything about it on a personal level. Their understanding of their own future lives can thus be described as *being out of their hands*. It also means that this group of young people represented the most dependent on institutional services in their transition from school to work.

It should be highlighted that young people's orientation towards an already highly restricted job market implies that these young people might fail to see opportunities beyond their local environment. Migrating was not perceived as an option. Mobility and flexibility were thus not seen as key dimensions to

improve their future job prospects. This understanding could be the outcome of the lack of social connections with people living outside the local area, the lack of travel experiences and thus knowledge about other places (which was often connected with a fear of the unknown), the lack of financial resources to migrate as well as a lack of self-confidence to believe that they could have an impact on their future lives. The reasons for this focus on the local might have been manifold. It meant, however, that these young people were not prepared to migrate although there was no guarantee for them that they will be able to stay.

Their locally oriented understandings of their future and the fact that they did not refer to the spatial dimension of socio-economic risks and inequalities (which was often translated by other participants as an East-West German difference) distinguished these young people clearly from the rest of participants. Their hopes, fears and wishes centred on their direct local environment which represented their experienced as well as their imagined action radius. Bauman (1998:2) has highlighted, however, that "immobility is not a realistic option in a world of permanent change". The exclusive focus on their local environment means that these students run the risk of not being prepared for the national and increasingly competitive and highly flexible job market. These students, who already represent the most disadvantaged ones due to the low educational level they attain, might thus run the risk of being unable to cope with and benefit from the risks and opportunities of second modernity as their limited range of socio-spatial practices make it unlikely that they acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and confidence to deal with the 'outside world' (see also Hörschelmann & Schäfer 2005).

7.3 Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the analysis of participants' future images. It has been argued that these images represent an important dimension which needs to be taken into account to understand how young people perceive and experience their everyday lives in rural East Germany. These images are both the outcome of young people's everyday experiences as well as impacting on their everyday lives. It has been particularly focused on aspects such as young people's future migration intentions and their understandings of how to improve their own life situation with regard to their future lives. These issues were analysed with regard to the ways by which participants translated and integrated these future images into their everyday lives through, for example, the development of specific strategies. Getting an understanding of these future images thus adds a valuable dimension to the aim of understanding the heterogeneity of young people's geographies. It particularly highlighted participants' understanding of their personal opportunities and restrictions with regard to building up their future careers and gave a deeper insight into the multiple ways in which young people in rural East Germany negotiate their future prospects.

Although participants perceived their future options, chances and dreams very differently, it was possible to develop a typology which distinguishes three main types of images. The following table (Table 7.1) gives an overview of the different types of these future images in relation to the typical attitudes, general approaches to realise future aims, young people's migration intention as well as the type of profession they were aiming for. In addition the table indicates the educational level and age of participants who developed such images.

Table 7.1: Typology of participants' imagined futures
(Source: Author)

	1a)	1b)	2a)	2b)	3)
Type of imagined futures	The future is mine: everything is possible	The future is mine: I will find my own way	Building up my own career	Building up: slowly but surely	The future is not in my hands
Typical attitude	I can do whatever I want; perception of unlimited opportunities, high level of individualisation	Very concrete but often one-sided idea about future live, including international places	Step by step approach – progressive. Aiming for stability and security	Step by step approach – doing what needs to be done, being on the safe side (stability and security)	No choice, wait and see, passive, wait and see
General approach to realise future aims	Proactive, highly flexible, high support from parents. Often referred to good social networks of parents. Intercultural openness. Referring to multiple strategies of developing own social networks and getting access to additional information.	Proactive but one-sided; support from parents. Get additional qualifications and information to prepare themselves	Progressive, following standardised ways to reach their aims. Challenging and negotiating their opportunities. Parental support. Develop a number of strategies to improve their chances.	Re-active. Do what is necessary to fulfil requirements and get a solid education.	Passive, attitude of 'learned helplessness' (Evans et al. 1999)
Key migration intention	These students were planning to leave the region to realise their interests and wishes. They aimed to migrate to West-Germany and/or demonstrated a strong orientation towards the international job market.	Feel need/wish to leave the country. Strong orientation towards other countries.	Generally liked their place of residence but were prepared to leave/ or wished to leave (particularly girls) → orientation towards regional and national job market	Prepared to leave if they cannot find job locally. Orientation towards regional and local job market	Hope to find something in the region. Leaving seems no option → orientation towards local job market
Examples of professions they are aiming for	Professional, managers, self-employed	Aiming for a lifestyle that allows them to develop their individuality	Administrative, skilled trades, personal service	Skilled trades, personal service, sales and customer service	Sales and customer service, elementary
Educational level	Only Gymnasium	Only Gymnasium	Gymnasium and Regionalschule	Mainly Regionalschule	Mainly Förderschule
Age group	Both age groups. (Younger participants tended to refer to a wider range of professions they were interested in, included dream-professions such as actress and so on).	Both had develop a specific idea about their future from a very early age	Older students tended to be a bit more pragmatic than younger ones.	Older students tended to be a bit more pragmatic than younger ones.	(The Förderschule does only go up to grade 9, no comparison between different age groups possible)

Only a very small number of participants (type 1: 'the future is mine') described their future lives in the light of personal fulfilment and personal choice. This small group of participants represented those with the highest educational achievement. They often referred to travel experiences, a high level of financial as well as motivational support from their parents, and a strong social network they could rely on. It further became clear that these participants were often actively involved in building up their own social networks within as well as beyond the local context and in developing multiple strategies to overcome perceived disadvantages. These participants thus actively found ways to bridge different spatial dimensions and showed high confidence in their own competencies. This extended spatial range of their everyday and imagined future lives indicates a high level of flexibility and mobility and corresponds with Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (2002) and Giddens' (1990) description of being engaged in a high level of the self-reflexive individualisation process. Following Hannerz (1990) understanding of cosmopolitan competence it could be argued that this small group of participants has developed a de-contextualised knowledge which allows them to easily perform in different settings.

However, young people's migration plans and aims of following an individualised lifestyle did not automatically indicate a higher level of flexibility, intercultural skills or openness. It could rather be shown that some participants' ideas about their future lives sometimes even seemed to hinder the development of alternative futures and thus the ability to respond and adapt to new situations even though they aimed to realise highly individualised lifestyles. It highlights the need to be more careful about the ways how to analyse and address the unequal ways in which young people profit and/or suffer from new opportunities and risks in second modernity. It also emphasises the importance

of analysing the multiple power-relations that characterise young people's everyday lives and the multiple strategies which they develop to overcome perceived disadvantages and to plan their future lives (Massey 1993; Panelli 2002; Massey 2005).

The second type of future image covers those which the majority of participants developed. This image was described as 'Building up my own future' and highlighted that most young people developed highly pragmatic understandings of their future lives. It included a relatively standardised step-by-step approach through which participants aimed to achieve a high level of stability and security to overcome the risk of unemployment. Participants who developed this type of future image shared the understanding that they could improve their job opportunities by moving to West Germany. Within this group it was possible to distinguish two sub-groups: the ones that were more progressively planning their future lives and those who followed a more reactive approach.

The first group (future image 2a) can be characterised as being highly active in developing and maintaining local and regional networks. They often developed creative strategies to overcome perceived disadvantages and showed a relatively high level of flexibility. In contrast to the first group they did not show a high level of intercultural openness or a high orientation beyond the German context and were not aiming for individualised lifestyles. The second group who developed this type of future image (future image 2b) can be described as being much less active. Their everyday and imagined future spatial range was much more limited than that of their counterparts and peer relations and the aim to conform and be part of that group was very important for them. These participants were often less clear about their future lives and

rather seemed to try to do what they felt was required. With regard to the negotiation of rural work the latter group developed hardly any strategies to gain additional information or qualifications which represented the main difference to the more active approach of their counterparts. It means that they did not find multiple ways of challenging perceived disadvantages as those who can be described as type 1 or 2a. And although these young people shared the general understanding that the West offered new opportunities to them they did often not include the option of future migration in their future images. It indicates that although participants had a clear idea about how to improve their personal choices and chances it did not automatically mean that they included these options in their understanding of their future lives.

On the one hand it could be argued that it might indicate an act of rebellion or individual decision making of the individual against mainstream perceptions. Considering that young people seemed to be 'educated out' of the East this could be welcomed as it demonstrates a form of resistance. On the other hand, however, it has to be questioned why these young people are so clear about how to improve their future chances and yet do not engage with finding ways to make them available to them. The passiveness and lack of motivation seems to be problematic, particularly because these young people's lives focused around their direct local environment and was strongly inward oriented. Their re-active attitude might not offer enough flexibility to adapt to new situations. It seems particularly important for this group of young people to become more active and develop skills which help them to overcome experienced disadvantages.

The third type of future images (future image 3) finally included participants who did perceive their futures as being 'out of their hands'. That this

group mainly included students from the Förderschule and thus those who are aiming for the lowest educational qualification indicates the existence of structural inequalities. These students often did not have any idea how to improve their chances and prepare themselves for the transition into the job market. They were often badly informed and did not refer to strong familial support or social networks. Further, they often referred to a highly limited spatial range of their everyday lives and had hardly any travel experiences. It means that those who are most at risk due to their low educational qualification have the least skills, support and motivation to improve their future prospects.

The analysis of the different types of future images highlights the differences amongst young people in their experiences and perceptions of their present day and future lives. It emphasises that participants' understanding of what they can achieve in future varied immensely amongst them. This seemed partly to be influenced by their educational achievement (which can be understood as an indicator of their socio-economic backgrounds, see Chapter 4). In addition, dimensions such as parental and familial support, social networks, and travel experiences and so on seemed to have an impact on the skills participants developed to become active in addressing perceived disadvantages themselves.

It could be shown, that Beck's (2002), Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (2002) and Giddens' (1994) descriptions of the self-reflexive individualisation process applies only to a very small number of participants (Type 1a). These often presented the most privileged young people who were aiming for the highest level of education, referred to strong familial support and social networks, a range of travel experiences and a high flexibility and mobility. It could further be shown, however, that young people's desire to realise

individualised lifestyles and to live in another country (see type 1b) can not always be equated with the cosmopolitan competences which characterised type 1a. It indicates that the distinction between traditional and individualised biographies (see Kötters et al. 1996) might not sufficiently explain who is equipped better to perform successfully in second modernity. Particularly when looking at those young people whose future images can be characterised in image 2a it became clear that these participants do follow a very pragmatic approach and aimed for security and stability rather than individual lifestyles. However, it could be shown that these young people often demonstrated a very high level flexibility and motivation and developed multiple strategies to overcome perceived disadvantages. It could thus be argued that these young people might be similarly well equipped to profit from new chances than their counterparts in type 1a.

Analysing the future images young people developed further highlighted the multiple ways in which young people perceive and experience their every day chances and risks. It indicates the (re)construction of inequalities amongst them and thus contributes empirically to a better understanding of unequal individualisation processes amongst young people (Furlong & Cartmel 1997; Evans 2002; Lehmann 2004; Shucksmith 2004; Wyness 2006). The analysis of such future images further gives insights into the different needs young people have and thus can help to prepare young people more equally for their future transition into the job market.

Although participants were concerned about their local job opportunities, the impact it had on their understanding of their own future lives was highly complex. While some aimed to overcome this risk by moving out of the region others developed strategies to improve their opportunities in the local market.

Some participants even felt that they could not influence their future lives. It became clear, however, that the majority of participants were aiming for stability and security. This could be interpreted as the outcome of their everyday experiences of poor job opportunities in the local area. But although participants identified risks such as the lack of employment and training facilities as an outcome of the transformation process, they did not describe themselves as the 'losers' of reunification. As already highlighted in Chapter 5 and 6 participants perceived the implications of the post-socialist transformation process on their everyday lives as being very different to the implications it had on the older (East German) generations (such as their parents and grandparents). It highlights the need to understand the post-socialist transformation process not as a one-way process to capitalism (see Chapter 2) and warns against oversimplified interpretations of the implications of the transformation process on people's everyday lives as discussed at the beginning of this chapter (see Brake 1996; Brake & Büchner 1996; Baur & Burrmann 2000; Engler 2002; Förster 2003; Kollmorgen 2003).

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

8. Introduction

This thesis provides insights into the ways in which young people in rural Mecklenburg-Vorpommern perceive and negotiate their life circumstances. It aimed to contribute to understanding the heterogeneous geographies of young people growing up in a rural, post-socialist environment.

This work was based on three main foundations. First, that there is a need for more empirical research to capture the complexity of young people's everyday lives, to better explain processes of social inclusion and exclusion. This includes a critical investigation of the opportunities and/or limitations of Beck's, Beck-Gernsheim's and Giddens' work on living conditions in second modernity. Second, feelings of insecurity have been amplified in Eastern Germany by the post-socialist transformation process which has, amongst other things, contributed to structural and social disadvantages (Brake & Büchner 1996; Baur & Burrmann 2000; Kollmorgen 2003). Thirdly, young people are active agents that are capable of determining their own life chances within the conditions set by these structural changes (Brannen & O'Brien 1995; James, Jenks & Prout 1998; Holloway & Valentine 2000; Shucksmith 2000; Jentsch 2004; Shucksmith 2004).

To understand spatial identity, it was therefore important to understand power relations within and beyond young people's local environment (Massey

1993, 2005). To achieve this, Panelli's (2002) work was used to explore these interactions by identifying ways that young people negotiate their lives in rural areas. Consequently, the thesis had five interlinked aims to:

1. examine young people's understanding, experience and meaning of space with regard to their rural residency
2. analyse young people's perception and experience of the post-socialist transformation process
3. acknowledge young people's agency within the context of their everyday lives
4. adopt a participatory research approach with young people and
5. inform theoretical developments in children's geographies and young people's lives in second modernity.

These objectives were necessarily broad in their scope but, together, provided insights into the interplay of structural conditions and young people's agency characterising the heterogeneous geographies of young people's everyday lives in a rural, post-socialist Germany. The following section summarises the main findings for each research question before drawing broader conclusions.

8.1 Young people's understanding, experience and meaning of growing up rural

Following the post-modern understanding that rurality is a social construction (Philo 1992) it was important to analyse not only how participants perceived and experienced 'growing up rural', but what power structures influenced these feelings (Murdoch & Pratt 1993). Two main findings emerged.

First, some key dimensions of perceived advantages and disadvantages of rural life overlapped with those identified by rural young people in other western European regions (see Furlong & Cartmel 1997; Matthews et al. 2000; Panelli 2002; Stockdale 2002; Glendenning 2003; Shucksmith 2004; Stockdale 2004; Panelli et al 2007). This highlights that young people's everyday lives in post-socialist countries should not be understood as being completely different from those who are growing up in other western European contexts. Therefore it is important that "we must not privilege the common distinctive features of the socialist countries to the extent that we lose sight of the many features shared all along with other parts of the world" (Hann et al. 2002:9, see also Stenning & Hörschelmann 2008).

Second, and linked to this, local power relations were significant in determining the use of rural space by young people. On the one hand, young people's position within their local community impacted on their sense of belonging and spatial attachment to the local community (see Chapter 5). Feelings of exclusion often originated from having restricted access to, or being excluded from, existing places and the lack of support from adult community members. On the other hand use of space was further influenced by power-relations amongst young people. Participants made use of their knowledge about the 'local geographies of youth' as a resource to create and negotiate rural spaces that matched their lifestyles (see work from Matthews, Limb & Percy-Smith 1998; Massey 1998; Robinson 2000).

These local power relations explain why some (groups of) young people avoided or felt excluded from specific spaces. Previous research findings indicate that these kind of experiences of exclusion can impact on young people's out-migration plans (Elder et al. 1996; Jones 1999; Stockdale 2002;

Glendinning et al. 2003). Such insights are particularly important with regard to developing a more inclusive environment for rural youths and to understand the meaning of space for young people's identity construction. Knowledge of these forms of social exclusion should inform political initiatives aiming to sustain or even increase the life quality for young people in East German (rural) regions. Rural areas should thus be understood *both* spaces of marginalisation and possibilities (Panelli 2002; Nairn et al. 2003).

These insights can be applied to country life in many European countries. The following section, however, examines what growing up in an East German region meant to young people.

8.2 Young people's perception and experience of the post-socialist transformation process

The analysis revealed that participants often *identified themselves as being 'East German'* and (re)produced East-West German stereotypes that enforced differences between East and West Germans. Such differences were perceived by participants as 'naturally given' and supported by media reports and public discourses.

This understanding of fundamental East-West German differences had major implications on participants' perception of the negotiation of 'rural work' and 'rural knowledge' (Panelli 2002) and the strategies they developed to prepare themselves for the job market. Shucksmith (2000) has argued that rural young people are integrated in two different labour markets: the local and the national/global market. Participants, however, distinguished between an East and a West German job market and identified the lack of job and training opportunities as an *East German disadvantage*. I argued in Chapter 6 and 7

that participants' perceptions of such fundamental East-West German differences often seemed to leave hardly any space for a reflection or awareness of rural-urban differences. The understanding that East Germany represented 'the past' and that new opportunities were available in the West might restrict the development of alternative ideas and strategies to develop their future lives. It seemed to call for 'developing a politics of mobility and access' as described by Massey (1993).

Although participants referred to disadvantages of their East German residency it did not mean that they described themselves as the 'losers of reunification' or that they referred to feelings such as being treated as 'second class citizens'. Rather, participants highlighted that multiple chances had emerged with reunification and noted the emergence of new opportunities and chances. These opportunities, however, were understood as opportunities that were available for the *younger generation*. Participants thus clearly distinguished between the different impact which the post-socialist transformation process had on their own and their parents' and grandparents' lives. These perceptions of generational differences question our understanding of people's experiences in second modernity. While Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) refer to all members in western European societies as 'freedom's children' they do not consider, for example, that new choices and risks might be perceived as affecting groups of people and, especially, generations differently. Their theoretical framework does not leave space for such differentiations.

These findings further highlight that such processes should not simply be understood as a linear processes of assimilation to 'capitalism' (see also Hörschelmann 2002; Stenning 2005) and contradicts previous explanations of the origin and persistence of East German identification (Pollack 1997;

Meulemann 1998; Pollack & Pickel 1998; Mühlmann 2001, 2002). It highlights the importance of understanding the multiple ways in which young people experience and negotiate their everyday lives in rural post-socialist regions.

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) describe out-migration as the outcome of the awareness of better personal opportunities at alternative locations and thus as an expression of increasing forms of individualisation. The analysis indicates, however, that this link between out-migration and processes of individualisation cannot easily be made. This became particularly clear in the analysis of participants' future images. Although participants described the option of moving as an expression of personal choice and freedom, the motive and thus the *purpose* of migrating was often highly pragmatic (rather than individualistic). It was often rather about *finding a job* than realising one's personal dreams and individual lifestyle. At the same time it became clear that the *direction* of migration was mainly discussed as a migration from East to West (Germany). The majority of participants thus perceived leaving the region as a step towards more security and stability rather than a way to develop an individualised biography.

These findings seem to support those of Köttters et al. (1996 see Chapter 3) who have shown that East German youth are still following standardised rather than individualised biographies. It could be interpreted as a disadvantage for rural East German youth as they thus might be less equipped to perform in an increasingly individualised and highly unstable world. I have argued, however, that those participants who developed a pragmatic understanding of their future lives addressing it in a pro-active way (future image 2a) showed a similar level of flexibility and mobility than those few who were aiming for an individualistic lifestyle (future image 1a). Although following a more standardised

biography these young people might be similarly well equipped to adapt to new situations and profit from new chances.

At the same time it could be shown that following an individualistic lifestyle did not automatically show high levels of flexibility, openness and intercultural skills (Chapter 7). It thus questions more generally how to define the 'winners' and 'losers' and that it might be necessary to re-think our understanding of who benefits and who suffers from new opportunities and risks in second modernity (see Chapter 2).

I have argued that the understanding of East-West German differences seemed to obscure rural-urban differences. At the same time it could be argued that it obscured local-global relationships as the understanding that new chances were West-German chances dominated young people's understanding. Only a very small number of participants reflected on a wider understanding of western chances including other European countries. It would be very interesting to analyse, how young people in other post-socialist countries interpret their chances. It could be assumed that they perceive having more opportunities in 'the western world' as well, but it would be interesting which countries or regions they perceive as offering the most opportunities and how differentiated their map of the West is. With regard to young people growing up in rural East Germany it could be shown that the West is primarily understood as Western-Germany which again could result in a restriction of young people's chances.

While it is important to equip young people with skills to adapt to new situations and to be flexible and mobile I would argue that it is equally important to acknowledge young people as present *and* potential future citizens within their local communities. There is a danger that young people might be

'educated out' of their local environment because of an understanding that new opportunities are available for young people *in the West*. The understanding of still existing fundamental differences between East and West Germany seemed to promote an understanding that young people's future was a *western future*. This, however, might lead to a neglect of involving young people in the local community and to a lack of knowledge about, for example, local job opportunities as indicated by participants. Consequently, it is important to understand better the role of young people's agency in understanding space and making decisions that reflect and affect their spatial identity. The following section explores the role of agency in more detail.

8.3 Acknowledging young people's agency within the wider context of their everyday lives

Following the new paradigm for the social science of childhood (James et al. 1998) this thesis aimed to give an insight into the heterogeneity of young people's geographies (see Chapter 2). The focus of the analysis was on the different ways that participants perceived, challenged and coped with disadvantages and the multiple power-relations which characterised their everyday lives.

Participants referred to very different experiences of restrictions and boundaries to express their agency. Some young people seemed to experience additional forms or higher levels of exclusion and seemed less able to overcome disadvantages than others. One of the key dimensions impacting on the experiences and feelings of exclusion was young people's social background which affected, for example, the financial resources available to

them to invest in better educational achievement and additional qualifications. Further, students who were aiming for the highest educational level and thus represent those from the highest social background often referred to a higher level of parental support and integration into wider social networks. It seemed easier for these students to organise, for example, additional work placements as they could make use of familial networks.

Another important dimension of inequalities represented gender specific expectations which seemed to result in restricted opportunities and choices for female young people. Participants' reference to traditional gender roles seems to support research findings which have highlighted that post-socialist transformation processes include forms of re-traditionalisation of gender differences (Dölling 2000; Klenner 2002; Schäfer 2005; Tomanovic & Ignjatovic 2006). Considering that the reproduction of traditional gender relations in rural areas results in rigid forms of social exclusion (see Dahlstroem 1996; Elder et al. 1996; Little & Austin 1996; Little 2002a, 2002b) gender inequalities need to be addressed to improve young people's life conditions within the rural context. Up to now, however, German policies have neglected to acknowledge the importance of gender with regard to young people's motives of leaving the area (see Dienel & Gerloff 2003). The thesis thus offers some insights into the importance of gender aspects with regard to young people's everyday and future life experiences and can inform further research in this area.

These findings further give empirical evidence of the uneven individualisation process as described in a number of studies which highlight still existing structural inequalities and the heterogeneity of young people's experiences in second modernity (see Furlong & Cartmel 1997; Deforges 1998; Shucksmith 2004; Hörschelmann & Schäfer 2005, 2007). This was also

confirmed in the analysis of young people's understanding of their future lives as the different types of images generally matched with their educational attainment (which can be seen as an indicator for their social background). However, the analysis of participants' future images revealed that while social background is an important factor, it does not solely determine how young people experience and perceive their everyday and future lives. It was also interesting to see that female participants who were aiming for the highest or second highest educational qualification (participants from the Gymnasium and Regionalschule) were often more creative and active with regard to developing strategies to overcome experienced disadvantages than their male counterparts. It could be argued that female participants' higher forms of agency can be read as a response to their perception of gender specific disadvantages within their *rural community*. This would be in line with previous research which has highlighted that the countryside is still characterised by more traditional gender roles resulting in less opportunities for girls and young women (Elder et al. 1996; Little & Austin 1996; Hughes 1997; Little 2002a, 2002b; Shucksmith 2004; Wiborg 2004; Rye 2006). However, researching young people's agency in urban contexts, Evans (2002) found higher levels of agency amongst girls as well. These findings seem to indicate that gender might play a role with regard to young people's ability to address and negotiate experienced disadvantages which needs to be researched further as it might represent a dimension of inequalities amongst young people

The analysis of young people's future images further revealed the importance of young people's understanding of their personal abilities and opportunities in form of their belief in what they could personally achieve. While these personal motivations and ambitions seemed to increase generally with

the level of educational qualification they were aiming for, differences could also be found amongst students aiming for the same educational levels.

My findings highlight the importance of contextual analysis and the multiple ways in which new risks, uncertainties and opportunities can be perceived and interpreted. Analysing the complexity of such understandings could help to get a deeper insight into the ways how young people prepare themselves and are prepared for their transition into the job market by their parents, relatives and friends. It is important to adopt a participatory approach when addressing these issues, as the next section argues.

8.4 Facilitating a participatory research approach

I developed a participatory research approach which foregrounded young people's perceptions and experiences. Retrospectively, I would argue that four stages of the project were crucial to the development of a participatory research project:

- the first, informal meeting with students (whole classes) to highlight that they were the experts of their everyday lives
- the provision of research training for participants
- the option for participants to develop their own (research) projects and
- the option to get in contact with other participants and to discuss relevant issues with adult gatekeepers (this also included the exhibitions which participants co-organised and which they seemed to value as an expression that their voices were valued and heard).

All of these different stages helped to make young people aware of their expert knowledge and to equip them with additional skills which increased their confidence. That participants seemed to feel comfortable in the research process and engaged highly found its expression, for example, in the fact that all groups wanted to meet more often than the three times which I had aimed for and that 8 out of 9 groups further developed their own research projects. Young people's desire to improve their life situations and to engage with their local communities also found its expression in the high amount of time and work young people put into preparation of the workshop and the exhibitions of their research projects (see Chapter 4).

The research training session at the beginning of the project helped to make the research process transparent to participants, to equip them with additional skills and to increase participants' control over the research process. The development of research skills further promoted more equal power-relations amongst participants (Alderson 2000; Kellett 2005; Cahill 2007). I have argued elsewhere (see Schäfer & Yarwood 2008) that it was crucial to offer the research training without *obliging* young people to a specific level of involvement such as: becoming a researcher themselves. In other words, the success of involving young people with different backgrounds, abilities and interests was, at least partly, dependent on giving participants the space to make their own decisions at which level and for how long they wanted to be involved in the project. It indicates that offering young people such choice helps to address the risk of excluding less confident and shy young people from the research. It further offers an insight into the complex power-relations which characterise young people's lives – particularly those amongst young people (see Schäfer & Yarwood 2008).

I also want to reflect on some limitations of the chosen methodological approach. When I first approached young people in schools to introduce the research project it became clear that it was often easier for those young people to participate who lived less remotely. It was possible in some cases to arrange or provide additional transport opportunities for those who wished to participate but had difficulties to come to the meetings. It meant that 36 out of 67 participants lived in villages with less than 700 inhabitants while the rest lived in one of the three small towns where the schools were situated (see Chapter 4). To include an even higher rate of students from highly remote areas additional one-to-one interviews in young people's homes could have been conducted. However, I was a complete outsider to the communities when I started the project. I felt that accessing young people through schools would be the most appropriate way to offer a safe environment for participants as I could not draw on a sufficient level of trust to propose interviews in young people's homes at the beginning of the study.

It would have also been very interesting to include those young people who are excluded from or cannot be accessed through school. However, it was difficult to build up networks within the research area before moving there which made it difficult to develop access to this group of young people. In addition, I decided not to conduct one-to-one interviews as the focus groups offered additional insights into young people's interaction with their peers and helped to analyse power-relations between them.

I had hoped to be able to include participants even more in the data analysis and dissemination process. I tried, for example, to facilitate the editing process of the video which one group made on their everyday lives by teaching students basic editing skills to then edit it together. I had arranged and planned

4 meetings in which to do this. However, it was summer time and participants seemed to prefer spending their time at the local lake and meeting up with friends. The participants and I finally agreed on a detailed script for editing process and I edited two versions which I showed to the participants. They then chose the one they liked best and this version was shown at the exhibitions.

Kesby (2007b) argues that the empowering potential of participatory research projects is reflected in the extent to which participation provides young people with additional resources to transform their agency. In the analysis I have highlighted that young people made use of the project in different ways to address and challenge experienced disadvantages. This became particularly clear with regard to the self-chosen and self-conducted research projects which participants developed. One group of participants, for example, developed a research project to increase their knowledge about local job opportunities and made their findings available to other young people (Chapter 6). Two other groups of participants conducted interview-projects on the topic of right wing radicalism aiming to challenge the often highly stereotypic ways in which East German youth is portrayed in the media. The development of these kinds of projects indicate that the project provided the facilities, resources and the space for young people to address, respond and hopefully challenge experienced disadvantages. Further, it could be shown that participants perceived participation in the project as a form of gaining additional qualifications and/or developing specific skills. They also valued the certificate highly which they were planning to include in future research applications.

However, my research project was restricted in facilitating a shared decision-making process between adults and young people (Hart 1997). The workshop and the exhibitions where young people and adult gatekeepers finally

met were placed at the end of the research project and I believe that it was at this stage that such shared decision-making processes might have been negotiated. For me, this refers to the importance of time and embedding the research project within the everyday contexts of young people's lives to create more sustainable participatory spaces (see also Kesby 2005; 2007a).

Nonetheless, the chosen approach was seen as a highly valuable way to acknowledge young people as experts of their own lives (Kellett et al. 2004; Kellett 2005) and to get a deeper insight into the complex power-relations which characterised young people's geographies. It offered young people opportunities for personal development and skills training which they were often eager to make use of.

8.5 Informing theoretical developments in children's geographies and young people's lives in second modernity

This research offers valuable theoretical and empirical contributions to key aims of children's geographies, namely, addressing the heterogeneity of young people's lives and uncovering their everyday life experiences from their own perspectives. It contributes to the dimension of rural geography in offering a deeper insight into young people's constructions of rural knowledge and their experiences and perceptions of growing up rural. By highlighting the impact of the post-socialist transformation process of young people's everyday lives it further challenges the universal understanding of 'the rural' and contributes to a more plural geographical analysis (Woods 2005) of young people's lives in second modernity. It could be shown that power-relations amongst young

people need to be acknowledged as an additional dimension of power-relations which characterise young people's everyday lives. Such power-relations, however, have mainly been neglected in previous research and add a valuable contribution to the aim of uncovering unequal individualisation processes amongst young people.

Connecting the wider context of second modernity (Giddens 1990, 1994; Beck 2000; Giddens 2000; Beck 2002; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2002) with Massey's (1993, 2005) theorisation of space did allow the analysis of multiple power-relations within and beyond the local environment which impact on young people everyday lives in rural East Germany. It could also be shown that participants identified a number of similar experiences as those in other rural European regions, which highlights the need to include them in discussions on young people's lives in second modernity.

Research on young people's lives in the context of globalisation and second modernity is still dominated by a dichotomous concept of global-local relationship. The latter, however, does not offer a conceptual frame to include young people's lives in post-socialist countries (see also Schäfer 2007). The dominance of the inner-German discourse of East-West German differences as (re)produced by participants of this research project thus indicates that focussing on the global and/or local might run the risk of overlooking power-relations which can not easily be captured by this dichotomous understanding.

A small number of participants seemed to be involved in a high level of self-reflexivity as described in the context of second modernity which indicates the potential of this theoretical concept to explain, for example, processes of individualization. However, the empirical findings give an insight into the complexity of participant's experiences and the multiple ways in which they

made sense of their everyday and future lives. This clearly demonstrates the limitations of this theoretical framework. Introducing Massey's (1993, 2005) concept of space and Panelli's (2002) model of dimensions of negotiation to research empirically the multiple power-relations which characterise the everyday lives of young people who grow up in a rural environment offers one way, however, to developing the work of Beck, Beck-Gernsheim and Giddens further.

The analysis of the complex ways in which young people experience and perceive their lives in a rural post-socialist context supports empirical findings (Roberts et al. 2000; Hörschelmann 2002; Pilkington et al. 2002; Pilkington and Johnson 2003; Pilkington 2004; Hörschelmann & Schäfer 2005) which have highlighted that some values and norms, developed in the post-socialist past and/or in the transformation process, still seem to be relevant. However, contrary to previous findings, it could be shown that these young people do not perceive themselves as 'losers of unification' and/or 'second class citizens' (Meulemann 1998). Although they referred to still existing differences between East and West Germans and referred to disadvantages of growing up in the post-socialist part of Germany, participants at the same time highlighted the increased opportunities which had emerged with reunification. The analysis further revealed that young people clearly distinguished between the implications of reunification on their own and their parent's/grandparent's lives. They thus referred to intergenerational differences in the ways in which past and present experiences affected people's everyday and future lives in East Germany.

These empirical findings support recent calls for a more complex conceptualisation of post-socialism. In line with social scientists who have

identified the problem that people's lives in post-socialist contexts is generally perceived as outside of the (western) core (Pilkington 2004) and that the post-socialist transition is falsely understood of leading to an assimilation to western societies (Young & Smith 1998; Burawoy & Verdery 1999; Light 2001; Hörschelmann 2002; Pilkington et al. 2002; Pilkington & Johnson 2003; Pilkington 2004; Schäfer 2005; Stenning 2005; Stenning & Hörschelmann 2008) Stenning and Hörschelmann (2008) have recently offered an interesting approach to conceptualise the heterogeneity of people's lives in post-socialist contexts. My research findings support their call for the need to conceptualise geographical difference within and between the post-socialist societies and, for example, the western European World.

Finally, I want to offer a theoretical framework for analysing young people's future images conceptually in future research. I have argued that these future images offer an additional insight into young people's perceptions of their present day and future lives and thus their socially situated agency (Evans 2002) and the emergence of inequalities amongst young people. These future images refer not only to young people's ideas about where they want to live in future and what they want to do professionally but also include their aims, interests, fears and hopes reflecting young people's understanding of personal opportunities and restrictions. The analysis of participants' imagined futures was highly valuable as it provided a deeper insight into the wider contexts young people are growing up in. Bjarnason and Thorlindsson (2006: 291) have in this context argued that "[t]he collective residential intentions of adolescents at a given point in time can be seen as a community level property that may affect the attitudes and behaviours of younger and older residents alike". This indicates that young people's migration intention mirror more general

understandings of childhood and youth within the local context and how they are perceived and positioned within the local community.

The typology of future images particularly highlighted the multiple ways how young people translate and make sense of their everyday experiences for their own lives. It could be shown, for example, that although all participants understood new opportunities as *western opportunities* which were available for them through migration to the West, only a relatively small number of participants actually included the aim to migrate into their future plans. Such contradictions indicate the heterogeneity of power-relations which characterise young people's everyday lives and needs to be investigated further to understand and address inequalities amongst them.

To capture the importance of young people's future images as reflections on their present day lives as well as impacting on everyday decision making processes it is useful to employ the idea of *futurescapes* after Appadurai's (1990) 'dimensions of cultural flow' which he uses to capture the global-local aspects of people's everyday lives in second modernity (see also Hörschelmann and Schäfer 2005). The notion of 'scapes' highlights the importance of imagined worlds that can include spaces and places within and beyond young peoples' local environment. It further puts the individual perspective into the focus of analysis and thus represents a way of describing, reconstructing and understanding how young people make sense of their everyday life experiences and how they (spatially) translate them into their imagined futures.

Young people's futurescapes thus reflect on what they perceive as achievable and/or desirable at a specific time in their life course and are based on their experiences as well as their understanding of personal abilities and

competences. These ideas about their future lives are far from deterministic and are in a constant process of (re)construction which means that they can change with time. Furthermore, it could be shown that skills and competencies are developed highly unevenly amongst young people and are dependent on both their agency and the wider context and thus the multiple power relations they are growing up in.

Appadurai's (1990) dimensions of cultural flow capture the different dimensions that represent the global-local aspects of life in second modernity. The strength of this concept is that it highlights the complexity and overlapping character of global cultural flow as it identifies the global world we are living in as a highly interactive one where the global and the local reinforce each other. Therefore Appadurai's approach can be seen as a further development of Robertson's (1990) theory of 'glocalization' and follows Massey's (1993, 2005) call to overcome the global-local dichotomy.

I argue that Appadurai's dimensions of cultural flow can be extended by the dimension of futurescapes which captures people's images of their own future lives. Although Appadurai has included people's imagined future travels into his concept of ethnoscaples I argue that young people often develop complex ideas about their own future lives which include an understanding of personal choices and opportunities. In addition to the understanding of 'dreamscapes' as developed by Hörschmann and Schäfer (2005) the notion of futurescapes includes those aspects that young people connect with their future lives: migrating intention, job aspirations as well as their personal hopes and fears. It thus does not only reflect on specific places they want to visit in future but also includes their understanding of individual opportunities and limits.

Developing typologies of futurescapes allows a better understanding of the contexts which characterise young people's everyday lives and helps to understand which resources they draw on to achieve their agency (see Kesby 2008). It also provides a more differentiated insight into the varied needs, interests and abilities young people have. This typology can be used to inform communal or governmental strategies to address and challenge inequalities amongst young people.

The fluid nature of futurescapes further recognises that rurality can be understood as a 'complex interweaving of power relations, social conventions, discursive practices and institutional forces that are constantly combining and recombining' (Cloke 2006:24). It conceptually highlights that rural localities, their representation and the varied experiences of young people's lives are not only interwoven but relational according to wider power structures and political influences (Halfacree 2006). Rather than attempting to distinguish between the 'myth and reality' of rural places, it has been recognised that places, meanings and everyday life experiences are enfolded into each other (Massey 1993; Panelli 2002; Cloke 2003; Massey 2005; Halfacree 2006). The concept of futurescapes provides a way of navigating these complex ruralities, linking varied past and present day circumstances with heterogeneous futures.

8.6 Concluding remarks

As already highlighted in Chapter 1, the high out-migration of young people in particular is one of the main problems this region has to face. And although policy interventions have tried to tackle this issue they have failed to prevent this trend (see Dienel & Gerloff 2003). However, services and facilities

for young people in the region will further decrease and that the majority of staff in the youth sector is under qualified and only on short-term contracts (Opitz-Karig 2003). This means that dimensions such as young people's integration into the community and feelings of socio-spatial attachment become particularly important to enhance feelings of well-being as they are less dependent on financial sources than, for example, the running of leisure facilities. This indicates that young people's position within their local communities, their experiences of inclusion and exclusion might become the key resource communities can build on in future.

I also want to highlight that it seems important to challenge participants' over-generalised understanding of the West (and here mainly West Germany) as their future and of mobility to the West as the only and secure way to overcome experienced disadvantages. How deeply rooted this understanding was and that it seemed to represent an understanding which was shared by, for example, adult gate-keepers was reflected in young people's described lack of knowledge about local and East German job opportunities which could indicate that they are educated out of the East (see Chapter 6).

I would thus argue that it is important to initiate a more differentiated understanding of young people's personal opportunities, for example, in bigger East German cities as well as beyond the German context. The need to challenge the dominant inner-German discourse of fundamental East-West German differences became particularly apparent in how participants' described how different skills were needed to succeed in the West German or the East German job market. They translated this understanding into personal strategies to prepare themselves for the transition into the job market. However, a small number of participants seemed to be sceptical about the assumption of

fundamental East-West German differences (see Chapter 5). These young people often represented those who had regular contact with, for example, West German relatives. One way to facilitate a more critical understanding of East-West German differences and similarities and young people's opportunities to develop their careers in Germany could be to institutionalise school exchanges with western and eastern schools or excursions to East and West German cities. This could facilitate a more differentiated understanding of young people's future opportunities. Children's geographies provides an apposite and invaluable way of studying these issues and can contribute to a politically engaged discussion on young people's present day and future geographies.

Appendices

Appendix A: Ethical Guidelines

Excerpt from "University of Plymouth: Research Policies and Practices" Plymouth: November 2002: p. 20/21

Ethical principles for research involving human participants

1. Informed consent

The researcher should, where possible, inform potential participants in advance of any features of the research that might reasonably be expected to influence their willingness to take part in the study. Where the research topic is sensitive, the ethical protocol should include verbatim instructions for the informed consent procedure and consent should be obtained in writing. Where children are concerned, informed consent may be obtained from parents or teachers acting in loco parentis, or from the children themselves if they are of sufficient understanding. However, where the topic of research is sensitive, written informed consent should be obtained from individual parents.

2. Openness and honesty

So far as possible, researchers should be open and honest about the research, its purpose and application. Some types of research appear to require deception in order to achieve their scientific purpose. Deception will be approved in experimental procedures only if the following conditions are met:

- a. Deception is completely unavoidable if the purpose of the research is to be achieved.
- b. The research objective has strong scientific merit.
- c. Any potential harm arising from the proposed deception can be effectively neutralised or reversed by the proposed debriefing procedures (see section 5).

Failing to inform participants of the specific purpose of the study at the outset is not normally considered to be deception, provided that adequate informed consent and debriefing procedures are proposed. Covert observation should be resorted to only where it is impossible to use other methods to obtain essential data. Ideally, where informed consent has not been obtained prior to the research it should be obtained post hoc.

3. Right to withdraw

Where possible, participants should be informed at the outset of the study that they have the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. In the case of children, those acting in loco parentis or the children themselves if of sufficient understanding, shall be informed of the right to withdraw from participation in the study.

4. Protection from Harm

Researchers must endeavour to protect participants from physical and psychological harm at all times during the investigation. Note that where stressful or hazardous procedures are concerned, obtaining informed consent (1) whilst essential, does not absolve the researcher from responsibility for protecting the participant. In such cases, the ethical protocol must specify the means by which the participant will be protected, e.g. by the availability of qualified medical assistance. Where physical or mental harm nevertheless does result from research procedure, investigators are obliged to take action to remedy the problems created.

5. Debriefing

Researchers should, where possible, provide an account of the purpose of the study as well as its procedures. If this is not possible at the outset, then ideally it should be provided on completion of the study.

6. Confidentiality

Except with the consent of the participant, researchers are required to ensure confidentiality of the participant's identity and data throughout the conduct and reporting of the research. Ethical protocols may need to specify procedures for how this will be achieved. For example,

transcriptions of the interviews may be encoded by the secretary so that no written record of the participant's name and data exist side by side. Where records are held on computer, the Data Protection Act also applies.

7. Ethical principles of professional bodies

This set of principles is generic and not exhaustive of considerations which apply in all disciplines. Where relevant professional bodies have published their own guidelines and principles, these must be followed and the current principles interpreted and extended as necessary in this context.

Appendix B: Questionnaire (German)

Plymouth, Juni 2004

Liebe Jugendlichen,

dieser Fragebogen wurde im Rahmen des Forschungsprojektes "Lebensalltag und Zukunftsvorstellungen von ländlichen Jugendlichen in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern" entworfen und bildet die Grundlage für das weitere Forschungsprojekt.

Das Ausfüllen des Fragebogens dauert ca. 25-30 Minuten und erfolgt auf freiwilliger Basis. Ihr werdet gebeten, jeweils eine der vorgegebenen Antwort anzukreuzen. Wenn mehrere Kategorien angekreuzt werden können, findet Ihr die Bemerkung „Mehrfachnennungen möglich“. Bei einigen Fragen werdet Ihr auch aufgefordert, selbst etwas aufzuschreiben. Wenn es Fragen gibt, die Ihr nicht beantworten wollt oder könnt, lasst sie einfach frei.

Wenn Ihr den Fragebogen ausgefüllt habt, steckt ihn in den beigelegten Briefumschlag und gebt ihn verschlossen an Eure Lehrerin/Euren Lehrer zurück. Die Lehrkräfte wurden gebeten, die Fragebögen verschlossen an uns weiterzureichen, was garantiert, dass niemand Euren ausgefüllten Fragebogen einsehen kann.

Euer Fragebogen wird streng vertraulich behandelt und von uns vollständig anonymisiert.

Vielen Dank für Eure Mitarbeit und viel Spass beim Ausfüllen des Fragebogens.
Eure

Nadine Schäfer

University of Plymouth/ United Kingdom

Fragen zur Person

(1) Überlege Dir einen Phantasienamen. Dieser Name garantiert, dass Deine Daten anonymisiert sind, weil nur Du ihn kennst. Für eine weitere Teilnahme am Forschungsprojekt solltest Du Dir diesen Namen merken!

.....

(2) Wann bist Du geboren? Im Jahr 19

(3) Welches Geschlecht hast Du? ☐ weiblich ☐ männlich

(4) Welchen Schulabschluss strebst Du an (oder hast Du)?

- ☐ Keinen Abschluss ☐ Hauptschulabschluss
- ☐ Realschulabschluss (10. Klasse) ☐ Abitur
- ☐ anderen Abschluss, und zwar

(5) Bei wem lebst Du zur Zeit? Bitte kreuze an, was zutrifft:

Beiden Eltern	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mutter	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mutter und Lebenspartner	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vater	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vater und Lebenspartnerin	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ich lebe allein	<input type="checkbox"/>

Anderen Erziehungsberechtigten	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grosseltern/Verwandten	<input type="checkbox"/>
Partner/Partnerin	<input type="checkbox"/>
In einer WG/Freunden	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ich wohne im Internat/Heim	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ich wohne bei jemand anders, und zwar:	<input type="checkbox"/>

(6) Was machen Deine Eltern beruflich?

	Momentane Berufstätigkeit	Arbeitet Vollzeit	Arbeitet Teilzeit	Arbeitslos	Weiß nicht.
Mutter		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vater		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Erziehungsberechtigte (falls nicht Vater und/oder Mutter)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Wohnort:

(7) Hast Du schon immer in Deinem jetzigen Wohnort gelebt?

Ja ☐ (Weiter mit Frage 9) Nein ☐

(8) Wenn nicht: Wo hast Du vorher gelebt (Ort, evtl. Bundesland)?

.....

(9) Lebst Du gerne an Deinem jetzigen Wohnort?

Sehr gerne <input type="checkbox"/>	Es ist ok <input type="checkbox"/>	Ungerne <input type="checkbox"/>	Ist mir egal <input type="checkbox"/>	Weiss nicht <input type="checkbox"/>
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(10) Was gefällt Dir besonders an Deinem Wohnort bzw. was fehlt Dir?

	Mir gefällt besonders	Ist in Ordnung	Mir fehlt	Ist mir egal	Weiss nicht
Ausgelmöglichkeiten (Diskothek, Clubs etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kulturelles Angebot (Kino, Theater etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Treffpunkte für Kinder und Jugendliche	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wohnungsangebot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ausbildungsstellen/ Jobangebote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landschaft/ Umgebung	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Freizeitangebot (Sport etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jugendclub, Jugendhaus oder ähnliches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meine Schule	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Etwas ganz anderes, und zwar:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Freizeit

(11) Wo triffst Du Dich mit Deinen Freunden nach der Schule am häufigsten?

Auf dem Schulhof/Schule <input type="checkbox"/>	Bei gemeinsamen Hobbies <input type="checkbox"/>	Bei mir zu Hause <input type="checkbox"/>	Bei meinen Freunden Zuhause <input type="checkbox"/>
Im Jugendclub <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Woanders und zwar:		

(12) Bist du Mitglied in einem/oder mehreren der folgenden Vereine?

- ☐ Sport (z.B. Sportverein, Tanzverein)
- ☐ Kultur und Musik (z.B. Gesangsverein, Kunstverein)
- ☐ Umwelt (z.B. Naturschutz-, Tierschutzvereinigung)
- ☐ Soziales und Gesundheit (z.B. gesundheitliche Selbsthilfe, karitative Vereinigung, Stadtteilinitiative)
- ☐ Politik (z.B. Partei, Bürgerinitiative, Menschenrechtsvereinigung)
- ☐ Religion (z.B. religiöse Gruppe)
- ☐ Sonstiger Verein, und zwar:

(13) Hast Du sonstige regelmäßige Hobbies?

Nein ☐ | Ja, ☐ und zwar:

.....

.....

(14) Bitte kreuze an, wie oft Du folgende Medien nutzt:

	Täglich	Wöchentlich	Monatlich	Nie
Fernseh gucken	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Zeitung lesen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Zeitschriften lesen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Radio hören	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Musik hören	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bücher lesen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet benutzen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computerspiele spielen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(15) Bekommst Du Taschengeld? Ja ☐, ca.Euro/Monat Nein ☐

(16) Verdienst Du Dir Geld durch einen Nebenjob? Ja ☐ Nein ☐

(17) Wieviel Geld hast Du im Monat zur Verfügung, dass Du für Dich selbst ausgeben kannst (Kleidung, Musik, Weggehen etc.)?

Ca. Euro

(18) Wofür gibst Du das meiste Geld aus?

.....
.....

Berufliche Zukunft

(19) Welchen Beruf möchtest Du erlernen? (Mehrfachnennungen möglich)

.....
.....

(20) Möchtest Du studieren? ☐ Ja ☐ Nein (weiter mit Frage 22)

(21) Wenn ja: welches Fach möchtest Du studieren?(Mehrfachnennungen möglich).....

.....

(22) Wer oder was ist Deiner Einschätzung nach sehr wichtig oder auch weniger wichtig für Deinen beruflichen Werdegang?

	<i>Einfluss auf meinen beruflichen Werdegang</i>	<i>Sehr wichtig</i>	<i>Wichtig</i>	<i>Weniger wichtig</i>	<i>unwichtig</i>	<i>Weiß ich nicht</i>
1.	Der Wunsch und Rat meiner Eltern/Verwandten	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Der Wunsch und Rat meiner Freunde	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Wie ich mich anderen gegenüber darstelle (z.B. im Vorstellungsgespräch)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Meine Abschlussnoten	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Zusatzqualifikationen (Sprachen, Praktika etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Arbeitsmarktbedingungen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Der eigene Wunsch/Eigenmotivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(23) Gibt es andere Dinge, die Deiner Meinung nach Einfluss auf Deinen Berufswunsch oder Deinen beruflichen Werdegang haben?

.....

.....

(24) Wie schätzt Du Deine beruflichen Chancen in der unmittelbaren Umgebung in der Du momentan wohnst oder auch in der nächst grösseren Stadt ein?

Sehr gut <input type="checkbox"/>	Gut <input type="checkbox"/>	Mittelmässig <input type="checkbox"/>	Schlecht <input type="checkbox"/>	Aussichtslos <input type="checkbox"/>	Weiß nicht <input type="checkbox"/>
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(25) Machst Du Dir manchmal Sorgen um Deine berufliche Zukunft?

☐ Ja, häufig ☐ Manchmal ☐ Nein ☐ Weiss nicht

(26) Wie wichtig sind die folgende Dinge in Bezug auf Deine zukünftige Arbeit?

		<i>Sehr wichtig</i>	<i>Wichtig</i>	<i>Weniger wichtig</i>	<i>Unwichtig</i>	<i>Weiß nicht</i>
1.	Beruf mit hoher Eigenverantwortung	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Gute Aufstiegschancen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Kontakt zu anderen Menschen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Möglichkeit, auch halbtags zu arbeiten	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Geregelte Arbeitszeit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Arbeits-/Ausbildungsplatz in der Region	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Arbeitsplatzsicherheit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	Gute Verdienstchancen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	Vereinbarkeit von Beruf und Familie	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	Weiterentwicklung meiner Fähigkeiten	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Allgemeine Fragen:

(27) Wo würdest Du gerne in Zukunft leben? (Mehrfachnennungen möglich)

Im Heimatort	<input type="checkbox"/>	In Ostdeutschland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ausserhalb Deutschlands	<input type="checkbox"/>
Im nächst größeren Ort	<input type="checkbox"/>	In Berlin	<input type="checkbox"/>	Weiss nicht	<input type="checkbox"/>
In Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	<input type="checkbox"/>	In Westdeutschland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ist mir egal	<input type="checkbox"/>

(28) Was ist Dir für Deine Zukunft besonders wichtig oder auch weniger wichtig?

		<i>Sehr wichtig</i>	<i>Wichtig</i>	<i>Weniger wichtig</i>	<i>Unwichtig</i>	<i>Weiß nicht</i>
1.	Einen Beruf zu haben, der Spaß macht	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Freunde zu haben	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Gute Partnerschaft/Ehe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Möglichst viel reisen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Karriere machen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.	Viel Freizeit haben	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Eigene Familie haben	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	Ein eigenes Haus haben	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	In der Gegend wohnen, wo ich jetzt wohne.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	Etwas anderes, und zwar:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(29) Interessierst Du Dich für Politik?

Sehr stark <input type="checkbox"/>	Stark <input type="checkbox"/>	Teilweise <input type="checkbox"/>	Kaum <input type="checkbox"/>	Gar nicht <input type="checkbox"/>
-------------------------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------------------	-------------------------------	------------------------------------

(30) Hast Du das Gefühl, dass die Interessen und Bedürfnisse Jugendlicher von der Landespolitik wahrgenommen werden?

Ja <input type="checkbox"/>	Teilweise <input type="checkbox"/>	Nein <input type="checkbox"/>	Ist mir egal <input type="checkbox"/>	Weiss nicht <input type="checkbox"/>
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(31) Würdest Du dich gerne mehr an politischen Entscheidungen beteiligen?

Ja <input type="checkbox"/>	Teilweise <input type="checkbox"/>	Nein <input type="checkbox"/>	Ist mir egal <input type="checkbox"/>	Weiss nicht <input type="checkbox"/>
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(32) Wie denkst Du über folgende Aussagen:

	Trifft vollkom- men zu	Trifft teilweise zu	Trifft überhaupt nicht zu	Weiß nicht
Ich möchte einen ähnlichen Beruf wie meine Eltern erlernen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alle haben die gleichen Chancen einen guten Job zu bekommen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wenn man wirklich arbeiten will findet man auch Arbeit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ich muss gut in der Schule sein, um einen guten Job zu bekommen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ich mache mir große Sorgen, einen Ausbildungsplatz zu bekommen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heutzutage kann man sich den Job nicht aussuchen. Man muss nehmen, was man kriegen kann.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Frauen und Männer haben die gleichen Chancen, einen guten Job zu bekommen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Frauen mit Kindern sollten auch die Möglichkeit haben, Vollzeit arbeiten zu gehen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Um einen guten Job zu bekommen, muss ich meine Region verlassen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ich möchte später auf jeden Fall auf dem Land leben.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Das Problem Arbeitslosigkeit betrifft insbesondere ländliche Jugendliche.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ich fühl mich gut informiert über die beruflichen Möglichkeiten, die ich habe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Für einen Beruf meine Heimat zu verlassen, sehe ich als Herausforderung.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Es ist mir wichtig, in meiner Region zu bleiben.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Vielen Dank für Deine Mitarbeit!

Wenn Du noch etwas ergänzen möchtest oder auch Kritikpunkte oder Verbesserungsvorschläge für den Fragebogen hast: Hier ist Platz dafür!

Appendix C: Questionnaire (English translation)



Plymouth, June 2004

Dear all,

This questionnaire was designed in the context of a research project exploring the 'Everyday lives and future prospects of young people in rural Mecklenburg-Vorpommern'. Your participation is absolutely voluntary!

It will take you around 25-30 minutes to fill this questionnaire out. You will be asked to tick *one* of the answers provided. If a number of answers can be given you will find the expression 'multiple answers possible'. For some questions you will also be asked to write down your own thoughts. Don't worry about questions which you can not or do not want to answer. Just move on to the next.

After you have filled out the questionnaire, please put it in the provided envelope and return it – sealed - to your teacher. Your teacher will then return the envelopes to us. Putting the questionnaires in a sealed envelope guarantees that nobody except you and the researchers can see your responses.

Your questionnaire will be made anonymous and treated in strict confidence.

Thank you very much for your participation.

Sincerely,

Nadine Schäfer

University of Plymouth/ United Kingdom

About you...

(1) Please, choose a fantasy-name. This name guarantees that your information is dealt with confidentially as you are the only one that knows that name. If you are interested to participate in the project further you should remember that name.

.....

(2) When were you born? In 19

(3) Are you ☐ female? ☐ male?

(4) Which secondary-qualification are you aiming for (or do you already have)?

- ☐ No qualification
- ☐ Hauptschulabschluss
- ☐ Realschulabschluss (10. Klasse)
- ☐ Abitur
- ☐ other qualification

(5) Who do you live with? (Multiple answers are possible)

Both parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other legal guardians	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mother	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grandparents/relatives	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mother and partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	Partner	<input type="checkbox"/>
Father	<input type="checkbox"/>	With friends/in a shared house or flat	<input type="checkbox"/>
Father and partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	Boarding school	<input type="checkbox"/>
I live on my own	<input type="checkbox"/>	I live with somebody else:	<input type="checkbox"/>

(6) What is the profession of your parents?

	Actual job	Full-time	Part-time	unemployed	I don't know
Mother		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Father		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal guardian (if not mother and father)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

You and your place of residence:

(7) Have you always lived in your actual place of residence?

Yes ☐

(Please continue with question number 9)

No ☐

(8) If not: where have you lived before (Name of town and federal state if possible)?

.....

(9) Do you like your home-town/village?

I like it a lot <input type="checkbox"/>	It is ok <input type="checkbox"/>	I don't like it <input type="checkbox"/>	I don't care <input type="checkbox"/>	I don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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(10) What do you like most in your place of residency? What do you miss?

	I like it a lot	It is ok	I miss it	I don't care	I don't know
Facilities to go out (discotheques, clubs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cultural facilities (theatre, cinema)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting points for young people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Available Accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscape, natural environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leisure activities (Sport etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youthclubs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In addition to this I like or miss:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Leisure time

(11) Where do you most commonly meet up with friends after school?

At the schoolyard <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> hobbies	At home <input type="checkbox"/>	At other friends' houses <input type="checkbox"/>
At the youthclub <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> We meet somewhere else (please indicate where):		

(12) Are you a member of one or several of the following clubs?

- ☐ Sport (e.g. Sports clubs, dance clubs)
☐ Culture and music (e.g. Singing, arts club)
☐ Environment (e.g. environmental club, animal protection)
☐ Social and Health (e.g. self-help groups)
☐ Politic (e.g. Political parties, action groups)
☐ Religion (e.g. Religious society)
☐ Other society or club: _____

(13) Do you have any other regular hobbies?

No ☐ Yes ☐ I do
.....
.....

(14) Please indicate how often you use the following media types

	Daily	weekly	monthly	never
Watching TV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading newspapers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading journals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening to radio	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening to music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read books	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Play computer games	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(15) Do you get any pocket-money? Yes ☐, around.Euro/month

No ☐

(16) Do you earn any money through part-time jobs? Yes ☐ No ☐

(17) How much money do you have per month that you can spend for your own (Cloth, music, going out and so on)?

Around Euro

(18) On what sorts of things do you spend most of your money on?

.....

.....

Job prospects

(19) What career would you like to follow? (Multiple answers are possible)

.....

.....

(20) Do you want to go into higher education? ☐ Yes ☐ No (please, continue with question 22)

(21) If yes: what do you want to study? (Multiple answers are possible).....

.....

(22) Who or what is from your point of view most or least influential in regard to achieving your chosen career?

		<i>Very important</i>	<i>important</i>	<i>Less important</i>	<i>unimportant</i>	<i>Do not know</i>
1.	The advice and expectations of my parents and relatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	The advice and expectations of my friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	My personal appearance and performance at job interviews for example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	My final results	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Additional qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Job market	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Something else:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(23) Do you think that something else has an impact on your future career?

.....

.....

(24) How do you rank your personal job opportunities in the town you are growing up in or in the next biggest city?

Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	good <input type="checkbox"/>	average <input type="checkbox"/>	Not good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very bad <input type="checkbox"/>	I don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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(25) Do you sometimes worry about your future job prospects?

☐ Yes, very often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never ☐ Don't know

(26) How important are the following aspects with regard to your future job?

		<i>Very important</i>	<i>important</i>	<i>Less important</i>	<i>unimportant</i>	<i>I don't know</i>
1.	To get a job with high responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Good promotion prospects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Contact to other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Possibility to work part-time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Regualted hours of work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Job within the region	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Job security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	Good income	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	Compatibility of job and family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	Development of personal skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

General questions about you and your future

(27) Where do you want to live in future? (Multiple answers are possible)

In my actual place of residence	<input type="checkbox"/>	In east-Germany	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outside of Germany	<input type="checkbox"/>
In the next biggest town	<input type="checkbox"/>	In Berlin	<input type="checkbox"/>	I don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
In Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	<input type="checkbox"/>	In west-Germany	<input type="checkbox"/>	I don't care	<input type="checkbox"/>

(28) What is most or least important to you in regard to you own future

		<i>Very important</i>	<i>important</i>	<i>Less important</i>	<i>unimportant</i>	<i>I don't know</i>
1.	To have a job that I like	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	To have friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	To be in a good relationship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	To travel a lot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	To build up my own career	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	To have a lot of free-time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	To have a family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	To have my own house	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	To stay in this region	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	Something different:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(29) Are you interested in politics?

Very interested	Interested	Some interest	Nearly no interest	No interest
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(30) Do you have the impression that young people's interests and needs are reflected in the 'Landespolitik' (regional politics)?

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	I don't care <input type="checkbox"/>	I don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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(31) Would you like to be engaged more into political decisions?

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	I don't care <input type="checkbox"/>	I don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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(32) What do you think about the following statements:

	Applies completely	Applies partly	Does not apply at all	I don't know
I want to do a similar job to my parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The opportunity to get a good job is equal to everybody	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you really want to work you will find work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have to have good results in school to be able to get a good job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I worry a lot about not getting a job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You can't choose your job any more. You have to take what you can get.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women and men have equal chances of getting a good job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women with children should have the chance to work part-time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have to leave my region to get a good job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I want definitely live in a rural region later on.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The risk of unemployment is particularly high for rural young people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am well informed about my job opportunities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I see it as a challenge to leave the region for a job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is important to me to stay in this region.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

If you want to add or criticise anything or want to make some suggestions for improvement of this questionnaire please feel free to do so. Your thoughts and comments are very much appreciated!

.....

.....

.....

.....

Appendix D:

Informal meeting: representation of region in newspapers, the internet and academic articles (German)

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern im Spiegel der Medien:

Die Zeit, (47) 2003: Vom Osten lernen. In den neuen Bundesländern werden die Unternehmen besser mit der Krise fertig als im Westen ...

Die Zeit, (38) 1996: Ostdeutschlands Hochschulen welken dahin: Sparen, kürzen, schließen

Die Zeit, (15) 1999: Die importierte Moral. (...) Ausländerfeindlichkeit ist normal in Ostdeutschland. Rechtsradikale Jugendliche zeigen ihre Gesinnung auf der Straße. Sie tragen Springerstiefel, Bomberjacken und andere Symbole. Kaum jemand protestiert dagegen (...)

Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend. Pressemitteilung vom 27.01.2004: „wir... hier und jetzt“ geht an den Start. Jugendlichen in den neuen Bundesländern eine Perspektive für ihre berufliche Entwicklung zu eröffnen und sie in ihrer Eigeninitiative zu unterstützen – das ist das Ziel des Projekts „wir... hier und jetzt“.

Die Tageszeitung, 07.10.2003: Weiblich, ledig, jung – dringend gesucht. Immer mehr junge Frauen aus Ostdeutschland gehen in den Westen. Jetzt sollen sie in Männerberufe gelockt werden

Schweriner Volkszeitung, 18.03.2004: „Schwerin immer mehr junge Leute verlassen Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Von den etwa 150 000 Menschen, die seit der Wende abwanderten, sind weit über die Hälfte Jugendliche. Dagegen zieht es die Senioren ins Land. War MV einst das jüngste Bundesland, könnte es bis 2020 das älteste sein“

Die Zeit, (02) 2001 Ostdeutschland steht auf der Kippe. Identitätskrise, mehr Arbeitslose, wirtschaftliche Abkoppelung. Jugendarbeitslosigkeit ist eines der gravierendsten Probleme in Ostdeutschland.

Die Zeit (11) 2004: Selbst der Bürgermeister will weg. In Anklam in Ostvorpommern geht alles verloren: Die Arbeitsplätze, die Zuversicht, die Bewohner.

Appendix E:

Transcripts (German) of interviews with young adults on their perception of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in preparation for informal meeting with participants

Junge Nicht-MecklenburgerInnen über ihr Bild von „Mecklenburg-Vorpommern“ und „ostdeutschen Jugendlichen“.

Junge Nicht-MecklenburgerInnen wurden folgende Fragen gestellt, um einen Eindruck zu bekommen, wie andere die Region sehen, in der die Jugendlichen leben:

- 1) Was fällt Dir zu Mecklenburg-Vorpommern ein?
- 2) Was fällt Dir zu ostdeutschen Jugendlichen ein?

Interview 1, männlich, 26 Jahre alt, aus Nordrhein-Westfalen:

Zu Frage 1: Seen, Wald, Natur, groß. Ostdeutschland, Ostsee, hm, das war es schon.

Zu Frage 2: Offen, tolerant, flexibel, hm, ja. Mehr weiß ich nicht.

Interview 2, männlich, 27 Jahre alt, aus Rheinland-Pfalz:

Zu Frage 1: Ganz allgemein? Müritz, Nationalparks, Grenze zur Ostsee, eh zu Polen, Ostseestrand, Rügen, Rostock, Werften, Zesenboote, idyllische Bauernhöfe, Dörfer, ehm, Tourismus. Mehr nicht.

Zu Frage 2: Ehm, problematisch, weil ehm starke rechtsradikale Tendenzen politisch beeinflusst und hohe Arbeitslosenraten und ehm, ja.

Interview 3, männlich, 26 Jahre alt aus Rheinland-Pfalz:

Zu Frage 1: Boah, nicht viel, gar nichts. Irgendwie Seenplatten und irgendwelche Seen gibt es da, mehr weiß ich nicht.

Zu Frage 2: Zu ostdeutschen Jugendlichen? Na, nur Klischees. Also, ich war noch nie im Osten, ich war einmal in Rostock gewesen mit dem KSC und da haben sie mit Backsteinen nach uns geschmissen, und das ist so das Klischee, das ich hab, aber mehr leider nicht, also ich war noch nie im Osten, da weiß ich leider nicht viel.

Interview 4, weiblich, 29 Jahre als, aus Schleswig-Holstein:

Zu Frage 1: Müritz, Nationalparks, Grenze zur Ostsee, eh, zu Polen, Rostock, Werften, Zesenboote, idyllische Bauernhöfe, Dörfer, ehm (lacht), Tourismus. Mehr nicht.

Zu Frage 2: Problematisch, weil starke rechtsradikale Tendenzen, hohe Arbeitslosenraten, ja.

Interview 4, männlich, 31 Jahre alt aus Brandenburg:

Zu Frage 1: Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, also da fällt mir als Erstes ein: Rügen, dann die Ostseeküste, Darß, Wollgast, weil da kenn ich jemand, dann wohnen Freunde von mir in Teterow, dann fällt mir ein: Buchenwälder und ganz viele Kraniche und was mir noch einfällt, sind Schweinswale an der Ostseeküste und Wismar, weil da mein Bruder wohnt, und dass man da super Radtouren machen kann. Dann fällt mir noch ein Boltenhagen, weil da war mein anderer Bruder an der Grenze, der war ein Strandlatscher und ist mit großen Lkws an der Grenze rumgefahren, dann fallen mir noch ein Haufen Nazis ein und die NPD als ziemlich starke Kraft, und sonst fallen mir aber noch ein Haufen nette Leute ein.

Zu Frage 2: Ostdeutsche Jugendliche. Da fällt mir erst mal ein, dass ich selber einer war, dass es viele Heavy Metals gibt (lacht) und mittlerweile ganz schön viele Kurzhaarige und dass es eine hohe Arbeitslosigkeit gibt und dass ostdeutsche Jugendliche wenig Arbeitsplätze finden und dass viele ostdeutsche Jugendliche aus Ostdeutschland weggehen, weil sie eben keine Arbeitsplätze finden und dass ostdeutsche Jugendliche besser zusammenhalten als westdeutsche Jugendliche.

Interview 5, weiblich, 32 Jahre alt, aus Devon (Süd-West England):

Zu Frage 1: I went to Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. I have really difficulties saying it, but I really did go there. And it is really beautiful there. The scenery is beautiful and the wildlife is quite exceptional. There is lots of green hills and lakes and it is very green and beautiful, it is a very lovely place. I do not know much about the people in the place but the pictures of it, the landscape is incredible, is lovely.

Zu Frage 2: Yes, I have. I have heard that ehm they are having quite a difficult time in social-in social eh, this is gonna sound terrible because it is too.... I have heard that there is a lot of problems there with jobs and I don't know if a lot of industry is there but I do not think that there are enough jobs being provided for young people. And that is a problem. But they are very lucky in where they live and when they leave there will be a lot of things that they miss but at the same time there are good reasons that they leave.

Appendix F:

Overview of the research projects developed and conducted by participants

School, Class	Project title	Content	Size
Regionalschule am Gotthunskamp/Röbel 10. Klasse	<i>Job opportunities in Röbel? A Photo- and Interview project</i>	Participants interviewed people within different professions in their home town to find out about actual job opportunities and vocational training possibilities.	6xA1 cardboard
Regionalschule am Gotthunskamp/Röbel 8. Klasse	<i>Our Röbel: the best locations and leisure opportunities for young People. A Photo project</i>	Young people took pictures of locations in their hometown which are important to them.	4xA1 cardboard
Allgemeine Förderschule 8. Klasse	<i>That's what I want to be! A Photo project</i>	Participants took photographs of themselves picturing their career aspiration.	3xA1 cardboard
Joliot-Curie-Gymnasium/Röbel 10. Klasse	<i>Regional Elections in Saxony and Brandenburg 2004. An informative brochure on the Election and Reactions by young people from MV.</i>	This brochure includes an informative part summarising the regional election results followed by interviews conducted by participants asking peers what they think about the increasing support of radical right winged parties. (+ a comment from the Regional Advice Team and the Camino gGmbH on how to handle this topic in school lessons/ advice for teachers)	Brochure
Joliot-Curie-Gymnasium/Röbel 8. Klasse	<i>An Insight into our Villages – A photo project.</i>	Students introduce their villages and describe how they spend their free time (Collages).	4x A1 cardboard
Regionalschule Rechlin 10. Klasse	<i>Young People in Rechlin – an Insight. Video project</i>	Participants made a film (ca. 20 minutes) giving an insight into the characteristics of their hometown and daily lives.	Video (ca. 20 minutes)
Regionalschule Rechlin 10. Klasse	<i>Right wing radicalism and East German Youth – an Interview Project</i>	This brochure includes an interview project led by 5 pupils (14 years old) asking other young people what they think about right wing radicalism.	Brochure
Regionalschule Penzlin, 8. Klasse	<i>From common place to treasures in every day life.</i>	Young people introduce their daily life and things that are important to them, places they like hobbies they do (Collages).	2x

Appendix G: Examples of coding in N6

Example 1: Coding in N6

REPORT ON NODES FROM (5) '/R_Space' = rural space

Depth: ALL

Restriction on coding data: NONE

- (5) /R_Space
- (5 1) /R_Space/private space
- (5 1 1) /R_Space/private space/own room
- (5 1 2) /R_Space/private space/at home
- (5 2) /R_Space/meeting places
- (5 3) /R_Space/transport
- (5 4) /R_Space/Own space
- (5 5) /R_Space/Spaces of fear + disgust
- (5 6) /R_Space/specific spaces in town
- (5 7) /R_Space/Financial aspects
- (5 8) /R_Space/What is missing
- (5 9) /R_Space/Holidays etc.: Knowledge of other places
- (5 10) /R_Space/age specific spaces
- (5 11) /R_Space/school
- (5 12) /R_Space/gender

Example 2: Coding in N6

QSR N6 Full version, revision 6.0.

Licensee: nschafer.

PROJECT: gotthun10_R, User Nadine

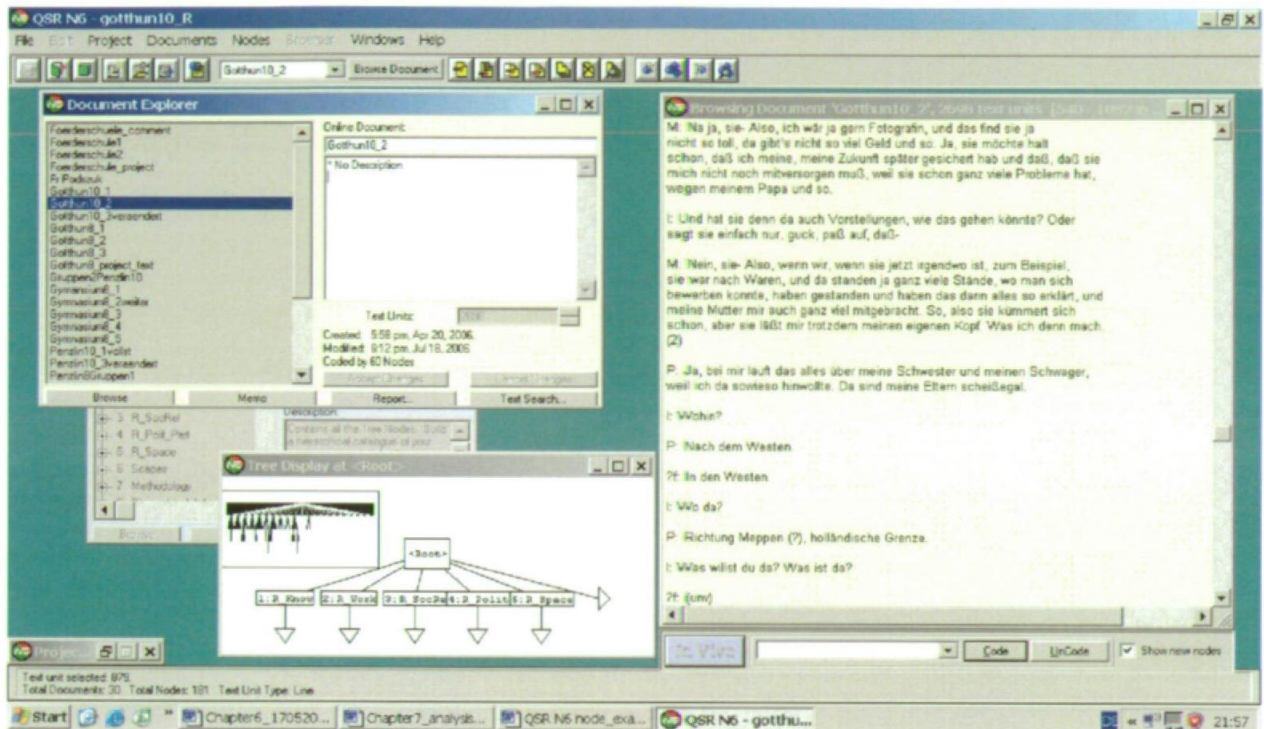
REPORT ON NODES FROM (3) '/R_SocRel' = Rural social relations

Depth: ALL

Restriction on coding data: NONE

- (3) /R_SocRel
- (3 1) /R_SocRel/Relation adults
- (3 1 1) /R_SocRel/Relation adults/parents&family
- (3 1 2) /R_SocRel/Relation adults/others
- (3 1 3) /R_SocRel/Relation adults/Influence of parents
- (3 1 4) /R_SocRel/Relation adults/relation youth-adult community members
- (3 1 5) /R_SocRel/Relation adults/Pressure (parents/own pressure?)
- (3 1 6) /R_SocRel/Relation adults/Loneliness
- (3 1 7) /R_SocRel/Relation adults/rebellion
- (3 1 8) /R_SocRel/Relation adults/Co-operation with adults + postive examples
- (3 1 9) /R_SocRel/Relation adults/Adult rules, general expectations+fears
- (3 2) /R_SocRel/relation among yp
- (3 2 1) /R_SocRel/relation among yp/friends
- (3 2 2) /R_SocRel/relation among yp/other groups of yp
- (3 2 3) /R_SocRel/relation among yp/class mates + FG
- (3 2 4) /R_SocRel/relation among yp/inter-school-relations
- (3 2 5) /R_SocRel/relation among yp/group-pressure
- (3 2 6) /R_SocRel/relation among yp/inclusion/exclusion/integration
- (3 2 7) /R_SocRel/relation among yp/fear
- (3 2 8) /R_SocRel/relation among yp/self description (scene)
- (3 3) /R_SocRel/Clear distancing
- (3 4) /R_SocRel/Differences between youth and adulthood
- (3 5) /R_SocRel/Pets

Example 3: Use of N6



Appendix H: Original quotations (German)

i Anika (RE10G3/50): [Es ist besser] Auf dem Land [aufzuwachsen], weil da ist nicht so viel Lärm. Und wenn man in der Stadt wohnt, da hat man ja nicht einmal einen richtigen Garten oder so, weil da gar kein Platz ist.

Martin: Kann man aber schon.

Anika: Ja, aber nur so ein kleines Muckelding da, nichts so wo du dich richtig hinsetzen kannst.

Martin: Es gibt aber auch so in Berlin Leute, die einen grösseren Garten haben als Leute hier so auf dem Land.

Sebastian: Ja, das sind aber die, die Kohle haben.

ii Manuela (GY8G3/124): Also, ich möchte auf keinen Fall hier [aus dem ländlichen Bereich] weg. Also, ich weiss einerseits gibt es hier nicht wirklich Jobs wird ja immer behauptet, aber ich, ich bin zwar in Berlin geboren, aber wenn ich jetzt nach Berlin komm, dann überall Autos und ich bin ja so ein Pferde-Narr und Katzen-Narr und allgemein Tiernarr, dann fühl ich mich in Berlin nicht wirklich wohl.

iii Melanie (GO10G2/1284): Ich hätte Angst, mich da [in Berlin] zu verlaufen, wenn ich denn irgendwo

bin, und denn muß ich da hin und da und da, und dann verfahr ich mich, fahr ich S-Bahn oder so, und dann land ich in Honolulu oder so. Na, da hätt ich übelst Angst vor irgendwie (...) auch wenn ich jetzt in so eine riesige Stadt ziehe und ich kenn da gar keinen.

iv Jakob (GY10G1/154): Ja, zwei [Jugendliche] spielen Playstation [im Jugendclub] und alle anderen sitzen drumrum.

NDS: Was macht ihr denn dann, wenn ihr nicht dort hingehet?

Amelie: Die normalen Jugendlichen sitzen Zuhause vor ihrem Rechner im Internet und kommunizieren mit anderen Leuten.

v Antje (GO10G2/1391): Aber ich finde, es gibt gar nicht so viele Arbeitsstellen für Mädchen. Find ich. Ja, wenn ich jetzt zum Beispiel ein Jugen wär wär ich Maurer geworden oder Strassenbauer oder Maler.

vi Nadja (RE10G3/27): Es ist ja eine Stadt eigentlich. Es gibt das Amt, Schule, Einkaufsmöglichkeiten.

vii Anika (RE10G3/14): Ja, aber auf dem Land leben wir ja eigentlich nicht mehr, also das würde ja bedeuten, dass wir auf dem Feld arbeiten und so. Und das machen wir ja nicht mehr. Und deswegen würde ich eigentlich nicht so unbedingt sagen, dass das so ist [dass wir auf dem Land leben].

viii Patrick (G10G2/1170): Ich denke nicht, dass die [Jugendliche, die in ostdeutschen Städten] besser dran sind als wir. Ich meine, vielleicht haben die mehr Möglichkeiten Job mässig so direct in deren Umgebung. Aber wer einen guten Job haben will, der muss nach West Deutschland.

ix NDS: (PE10G1/400): Kommen da auch mal Leute zu dir raus, die dich besuchen?

Janine: (Zögerlich) Manchmal.

NDS: Aber, zum Beispiel, da könnte man doch dann bestimmt gut zelten am Wochenende oder so was machen.

Stefan: Da is doch ein Acker.

Janine: Ein Acker, naja, kommt darauf an, manchmal, vielleicht. Müßte man mit dem Pächter vorher absprechen, und den sieht man kaum, und wenn, dann ist der irgendwo im Feld drin. Das ist nicht so einfach.

x Thomas (GY10G2/326): Ich mein, in Röbel haben wir ja einen Fussballplatz, aber der ist ja immer abgeschlossen, da kann man nicht draufgehen.

Markus: Na, man kann hintenrum gehen, da ist doch ein Loch im Zaun.

NDS: Aber könnt ihr nicht mit dem Bürgermeister reden oder so was?

Thomas: Ja vielleicht, aber der wohnt nicht bei uns im Dorf, der wohnt ja woanders.

xi Andre (GO10G2/450): Das ist ja praktisch nicht mein Zimmer, sondern das gehört ja noch meinen Eltern, und deswegen darf ich da auch nichts dran verändern. Und einen Schlüssel hab ich auch nie gekriegt für mein Zimmer, daß man das abschließen kann. Und mein Bruder auch nicht, weil meine Eltern das halt einfach nicht wollen, daß wir da, sag ich mal, nicht erreichbar sind für sie.

xii Anna (GY8G2/373): Ich darf keine Poster aufhängen. Aber mein Vater war mal weg ein Wochenende und da haben meine Mutter und ich einfach die Poster zusammen aufgehangen.

xiii NDS (PE10G1/290): Gibt es irgendwas, wo ihr sag: das bräuchten wir eigentlich?

Amelie: Also, im Dorf erst mal mehr für uns Jugendliche machen. Also, da ist ja irgendwie sonst nichts.

Stefan: Wir haben ja nicht mal ein richtiges Fußballfeld.

NDS: Kann man sich da nicht irgendwie ein Stückchen Land dafür zu bekommen?

Stefan: Machen sie [die Erwachsenen] ja nicht. Hatten sie zwar vor, aber das haben sie schon seit vier Jahren vor.

xiv Stefan (PE10G1/299): Naja, wir haben ein paar Tore gekauft und spielen jetzt auf dem Dorfplatz unter Protest von einigen Leuten, weil die sich Sorgen um ihre Fachwerkhäuser machen.

xv Bürgermeisterin 2 (workshop): Da würde ich eigentlich mal die Frage von den Jugendlichen beantwortet haben wollen, was sie sich denn so vorstellen?! Wenn sie in keinem Verein sind, wenn sie nicht gerne lesen, wenn sie nicht mit Freunden eine sinnvolle Beschäftigung finden, was sie sich von den Erwachsenen oder den Kommunalpolitikern oder von den Lehrern eigentlich so wünschen, was sie sich vorstellen?

xvi Amelie(PE10G1/182): Die [Bushaltestelle] wurde abgerissen.

Stefan: Wir waren zu laut da, und da wurde die abgerissen.

NDS: Ihr wart zu laut da?

Stefan: Ja.

NDS: Was habt ihr denn gemacht, dass man zu laut an der Bushaltestelle ist?

Stefan: Wenn manche besoffen sind...

Amelie: Es hat den Bürgermeister gestört. Und der Bürgermeister wurde dann abgewählt, und dann noch schnell davor die Bushaltestelle abgerissen.

NDS: Und was ist da jetzt?

Amelie: Gar nichts. Jetzt sitzen wir meistens auf dem Dorfplatz oder am Dorfteich.

xvii Natalie (PE10G1/1082): Die Erwachsenen vergessen, daß sie auch einmal Kinder waren oder Jugendliche und genau so einen Scheiß gemacht haben wie wir, sogar manchmal noch schlimmer, was meine Mutter mir so erzählt hat.

xviii NDS (GY10G2/340): Habt ihr das Gefühl habt, dass ihr einen Ansprechpartner habt? Oder was müßte passieren, damit Jugendlichen mehr Mitspracherecht haben?

Jakob: Das müsste so wie in der Schule sein. Jugendsprecher geben, also einen Jugendlichen, der dann zum Bürgermeister geht und das bespricht.

xix Jenny (GY8G2/204): Also, ich würde mich sehr freuen, wenn ich bei meiner Tante wohnen würde, weil ich auch einen viel besseren Kontakt zu ihr hab als zu meinen Eltern. Sie hat auch oft schon gesagt, dass sie mir meine kleine Wohnung auf dem Dachboden fertig macht. Da kann ich dann hinziehen, das find ich schön, weil ich bin gern bei meiner Cousine, bei meinem Cousin, gerne bei ihr [meiner Tante].

xx Robert (RE10G1/571): Wenn ich in der Zeitung stehe [wegen einer Sportauszeichnung] oder so, dann haben mich in der Schule auch schon einige Lehrer darauf angesprochen.

Nadja: Ja, bei mir auch.

Robert: Und die haben einen dann beglückwünscht und haben auch eine Durchsage gemacht. Und das fand ich auch gut so, weil was Positives hört man ja gerne. Es zeigt, dass die Lehrer sich wenigstens noch dafür interessieren was aus einem wird.

xxi Der Schülerclub (GO8project): Da gibt es leckere Sandwiches und Getränke. Meistens sind wir in der großen Pause dort oder nach der Schule. Wir treffen dort Freunde und spielen Billard, Tischtennis, Tischfußball etc. Auch Hausaufgaben machen wir dort. Dort kann man sich gut beschäftigen, wenn man eine Freistunde hat. Ohne den Club wüssten wir nicht, wo wir in einer Freistunde hingehen sollten, außerdem wäre es langweilig.

xxii Doreen (GO10G1/1159): In [Name eines Nachbardorfes], da ist keine Aufsicht mehr [im Jugendclub]. Also, einige Jugendliche sind schon 22, und die Jüngsten sind da 14 Jahre alt. Da ist keine Aufsicht mit bei. Die kriegen halt so einen Schlüssel von der Bürgermeisterin, und da wird auch ab und zu kontrolliert, ob alles in Ordnung ist oder nicht. Aber das läuft wirklich sehr gut da. Da gehe ich gerne hin.

xxiii Katharina (GO10G1/401): Na, bei gutem Wetter fahren wir meistens runter zum Campingplatz. Wir haben da einen Wohnwagen.

NDS: Echt? Wie, ihr habt da einen Wohnwagen? Du, deine Familie, oder ihr Jugendlichen?

Katharina: Nee. Mit Freunden.

NDS: Das ist ja spannend. Wie habt ihr das organisiert?

Katharina: Ja, der hat ursprünglich mal den Eltern von einem Freund von mir gehört, und die haben sich dann mal getrennt und das Ding aufgelassen, und dann haben wir uns das hergerichtet.

NDS: Und da könnt ihr euch immer treffen, wenn ihr wollt?

Katharina: Ja.

xxiv Die Bushaltestelle (GO8project): Das ist unser Lieblingsplatz in Röbel. Die Bushaltestelle wurde neu gemacht. Nach der Schule gehen wir uns häufig einen Döner holen und sitzen dann in der überdachten Bushaltestelle. Dann sieht man, wie die Busse kommen, wer ein- und aussteigt, und manchmal trifft man dann noch andere Freunde. Einige sitzen auch nur da, um eine zu Rauchen. Am Busbahnhof sitzen wir häufig, obwohl wir eigentlich immer von der Haltestelle an der Therme abfahren. Aber am Busbahnhof ist mehr los.

xxv NDS (RE10G1/524): Ja, aber die Sozialarbeiterin sagt, es gibt nichts für Jugendliche [in dem Dorf] aber die kommen auch nicht. Könnt ihr euch das erklären?

Robert: Da ist vielleicht das Problem, dass früher die Falschen da waren.

Nadja: Vielleicht ist das ja auch so wie hier.

Robert: Also hier ist das so, jetzt würde ich da schon aus Prinzip nicht hingehen, weil ich wüsste wer damals da war, da waren die Falschen da, und ich will nicht hingehen. Nicht, dass die wiederkommen.

xxvi Janine (GY8G2/707): Ich hab aber gehört, in Dammbeck soll das ganz schlimm sein mit Rechtsradikalen.

Silke: In Dammbeck ist das auch schlimm. Da treffen sich immer alle an der Tankstelle und kaufen sich dann Schnaps und alles und Zigaretten kaufen sie sich da.

Angie: Wenn ich von meinem Opa jetzt abends komme und es auch schon dunkel ist, dann stehen hier so Skinheads und Nazis und was weiss ich auch manchmal an der Tankstelle in Wittstock und besaufen sich.

xxvii Anja (GO10G1/733): Die [Nazis] sind immer im Multikulti [lokaler Dönerladen] oder in der Eiche [lokale Kneipe], wo die noch war. Aber die ist ja jetzt zu.

NDS: Was ist die „Eiche“ gewesen? Eine Kneipe?

Melanie: Ja, eine Kneipe, da saßen immer auch die Rechten drin.

Anja: Und da muß man immer Angst haben, wenn man da langgeht abends (...). Die haben so viel getrunken, da haben die sich dann gegenseitig verprügelt und Flaschen geworfen, und denn geht man da lng, so allein, und dann- nee. Also, ich find, das ist schon ganz schön gefährlich da so gewesen.

xxviii Melanie (GO10G1/740): Ich bin da nie vorbei gegangen [in dem Pub wo sich die Rechten getroffen haben], ich bin immer auf der anderen Straßenseite gegangen, ich bin nie da langgegangen, alleine.

Anja: Ich auch nicht.

xxix Tanja (GY8G2/699): Na, an der Half-pipe da sind die ganzen, Skater und die ganzen trendy Mädchen aber ich würd da auch nicht hingehen erstmal, weil ich irgendwie was hab

gegen Skater und ich hab auch was gegen diese kleinen Mädchen, die sind so cool und laufen mit Handtasche rum, so diese Britney Spears Hörerinnen da und deswegen wuerde ich auch nie versuchen, mich mit jemandem da anzufreunden oder auch zu reden. Da bleib ich lieber alleine.

xxx Amelie (GY10G1/141): Also wir haben einen Klub, der ist eigentlich ganz cool, aber so auf der einen Seite sind immer die 13 Jährigen und auf der anderen Seite sind die 28 Jährigen.

NDS: Und wo seid ihr dann?

Amelie: Na, wir sind da gar nicht.

xxxi Sonnenuhr (GO8project): Die Sonnenuhr ist beim Schülerjugendhaus. Das ist die kleine Sitzecke wo sich ältere Jugendliche treffen. Wir gehen da aber nicht hin.

xxxii Anja (GY8G4/272): Na, also ich glaube den einzigen Nachteil den wir haben ist, dass es nicht genug Arbeitsplätze für uns gibt. Ich meine, das ist ja nicht nur hier [Name des Dorfes in dem sie lebt] so, sondern in der ganzen Region. Naja, das ist eben anders in West Deutschland.

xxxiii Robert (RE10G4/222): Ich denk mal, dass im Osten viel über Beziehungen läuft, dass man viele Jobs durch Beziehungen kriegt, und das ist im Westen halt anders. Das haben viele schon gesagt: mein Vater ist da und jetzt bin ich da auch und im Westen gibt es das gar nicht. Da gehst du zum Einstellungstest und dann wird der Beste halt ausgesondert. Und das finde ich auch besser so.

xxxiv NDS (GO8G2/1598): Was denkt ihr denn ist besser geworden seit der Wiedervereinigung?

Dirk: Arbeitsstellen.

NDS: Ist das besser geworden? Wie meinst du das?

Dirk: Na, kann man mehr machen.

xxxv Janine (GO10G2/250): Alles in allem haben wir unheimlich viele Möglichkeiten. Wir können einen Job kriegen, wenn wir in den Westen gehen. Unsere Eltern konnten das nicht.

xxxvi Sven (PE10G2/716): Was soll das bedeuten: gezwungen werden? Nee, ich will ja weg und weisst du um einen guten Job zu bekommen man muss eben auch bereit sein etwas aufzugeben.

xxxvii Anna (GY8G4/289): Ja (lachen) ich hab damit ja auch kein Problem [dass Westdeutschland anders ist], ich will ja da auch gerne hin, weil ich denke, dass ich mich in dieser Gesellschaft besser zurecht finden würde. Ich mein, ich find mich ja hier auch zurecht.

xxxviii Nadine (GO8G2/1385): Die Wessis sind immer so hochnäsig, find ich.

Irina: Mhm.

Nadine: Schon, das sieht man auch schon im Fernsehen. Zum Beispiel die, ehm, was weiß ich, bei den Nachrichten, da kommen die auch schon immer hochnäsig rüber und so.

xxxix Nadine (GO8G2/1393): Na, ich hab jetzt, wo wir auf Klassenfahrt warn, da warn auch welche [Jugendliche] aus dem Westen. Da hab ich auch gedacht, oh Gott, hochnäsig, aber die warn eigentlich normal eigentlich, wie wir. Aber so, was man so manchmal hört oder so [über Westdeutsche], man denkt, oh Gott, Hilfe.

xl Melanie (GO10G3/783): ... das wird aber immer so sein, daß es so bleibt mit Ost und West.

Patrick: Das kriegt man nicht mehr raus.

NDS: Warum denn nicht? Was, was ist da so- was gibt es so für grundlegende Unterschiede, daß man das nicht rauskriegt?

Patrick: Na, das sagt eigentlich jeder! Das ist halt, die Mauer ist wirklich nur in manchen Köpfen gefallen. Der Rest ist noch da. Es gibt hier zu große Unterschiede.

NDS: Könnt ihr ein paar nennen? Also, wir hatten ja Verdienst auf jeden Fall.

Patrick: Ja, Lebensstandard ist auch anders, und allgemein, ich find da sind Unterschiede, und ich kenn viele, die nun sagen, Ost, West, ja. Das kriegt man nicht mehr raus irgendwie! Weiß ich nicht.

Anja: Früher wurde einem das ja auch richtig eingebrannt, also unsern Eltern, und wenn die dann halt noch erzählen, und dann wird das noch- dann brennen die das sozusagen wieder in das Kind ein und so weiter, also-

Melanie: Ja, das ist immer ein Kreislauf so.

xli Interviewer (GY8G4/292): Warum redet ihr eigentlich jetzt von zwei Gesellschaften?

Manuela: Das hab ich letztes Mal schon erzählt, das ist, weil ich bin so erzogen worden.

Anna: Ja, ich auch.

NDS: Dass das noch zwei Welten sind?

Manuela: Ja.

xlii Anna (GY8G4/298): Mein Vater erzieht mich zwar halt so, dass es nichts Schlimmes ist, dass die so sind, aber dass er halt ganz anders erzogen ist, ich weiss nicht, die sind halt für sich, eigen, und wir sind das Team, würd ich sagen.

xliii Manuela (GY8G3/659): Ich bin so erzogen worden, dass der Westen schlecht ist. Ich möchte nicht in den Westen.

xliv Maja (PE10G2/402): Man muss sich vorstellen dass plötzlich das ganze Land in dem du gelebt hast weg ist und du kannst nicht mehr zurück. Alles hat sich über Nacht verändert. I glaube, dass das schrecklich ist. Ich kann mir überhaupt nicht vorstellen, wie die Leute sich gefühlt haben müssen.

xlvi Anja (GO10G2/125): Also, wir wissen ja nicht wie das war in der DDR zu leben. Keiner von uns weiss das. Wir waren da ja noch nicht hier, also wir können nicht wirklich was dazu sagen.

xlvii NDS (GY8G3/663): Was ist denn so schlimm am Westen?

Manuela: Ich weiss nicht, ich weiss es nicht, ich bin eben so erzogen worden.

Tanja: Mein Vater mag auch keine Schwulen und ich find die niedlich. Ich richte mich doch nicht danach, was meine Eltern denken.

xlviii Martin (RE10G3/170): Nee, nur wenn dann ein Lehrer anfängt über Wessis herzuziehen, dann krieg ich schon manchmal einen Hals aber wenn man mal einen ganzen Tag mit einem Wessi unterwegs ist und der ist nicht viel anders als ein Ossi, dann kann man dazu halt schon einiges sagen. Wenn der Lehrer dann kommt, die Wessis klauen uns eh alles ... Ja, so die Wessis klauen den Ossis das Land und all sowas.

xlix Melanie (GO10G3/657): Es gibt ja sogar Leute, die sagen, sie würden die Mauer gern wiederhaben. Ich verstehe das einfach nicht.

li Sebastian (RE10G3/228): ... die hatten Arbeit, also keine Sorgen weil die ja auch Arbeit hatten ... und bei uns ist es ja anders herum, da kannst du ja froh sein, wenn du überhaupt Arbeit kriegst.

li Claudia (RE10G3/232): Also im Prinzip nur die Mauer wollen die wieder haben, das ist deren Meinung, aber meine nicht.

NDS: Die Meinung deiner Eltern?

Claudia: Ja.

Martin: Ja, aber dann denken sie nicht nach. Die sagen zwar Mauer her, und dann ist die Mauer da, aber dann ist McDonalds weg, dann ist Burger King weg, dann ist Cola weg.

lii Peter (GO10G3/805): Ach, am schlimmsten sind ja immer die Umfragen, ob die Mauer wieder aufgebaut werden soll. Das machen sie fast jedes Jahr.

NDS: Ja?

Peter: Ob die Deutschen die Mauer wiederhaben wollen.

Anika: Oder diese Ost-Shows, ist auch scheiße eigentlich.

lii Martin (RE10G3/192): Also, ich hab persönlich nichts gegen Wessis, also versteh ich nicht, was die [Printmedien] da haben, ob die kein anderes Thema haben für die Zeitung und das einfach mal wieder reinkloppen müssen?

liii Anna (GY8G3/705): Was ich auch nicht irgendwie mag ist wenn meine Eltern immer sagen, wie gut wir es jetzt haben und die früher im Osten irgendwie im Gegensatz zu heute, wie schlecht es denen ging.

Tanja: Da können wir ja wohl nichts für, wann wir geboren sind.

Anna: Ja eben, das sag ich dann ja auch immer, ich kann doch nichts dafür, dass ich jetzt in der Zeit [der Wiedervereinigung] geboren worden bin.

liv Ann (GO10G3/841): Meine Mutter ist auch jetzt schon über 6 Jahre arbeitslos. Wir hätten unsere ganze Wohnung mit den Bewerbungen tapezieren können. So viele hat sie schon geschrieben.

lv Maren (GO10G2/1015): Ich mein, am Ende liegt es doch an mir, oder nicht? Im Moment sind meine Schulnoten nicht so toll, also muss ich mehr für die Schule tun, um einen Job zu bekommen. Ich denke ich muss einfach mehr lernen.

lvi Maria (G10G3/875): Ich habe wirklich Angst, dass ich keine Ausbildung finde, ich mein, ich könnte vielleicht noch studieren gehen, aber dann? Was mach ich dann? Dann sitz ich hier und kann überhaupt nichts machen, weil es hier nichts zu tun gibt.

lvii Andrea (G10G3/993): Ja, Möglichkeiten haben wir ohne Ende. Wir können sie nur nicht wahrnehmen.

lviii Mareen (G10G3/1050): Es wird zwar immer gesagt wir hätten viele Möglichkeiten, aber wählen können wir eigentlich nicht. Es gibt einfach zu viele Jugendliche auf die wenigen Arbeitsplätze die es gibt.

lix Robert (RE10G2/108): Also, heutzutage muss man nehmen, was man kriegen kann weil es halt nicht viele Jobs gibt. Aber wenn man hart genug in der Schule lernt und dann gute Noten kriegt, dann denk ich hat man schon gute Chancen auf dem Arbeitsmarkt, auch wenn's da nicht so gut aussieht.

lx Melanie (GO10G2/1684): Am besten denkt man sich irgendwie, ach, könnt ich doch, würd ich doch schon meine Schule fertig haben oder so, oder einfach aufhören und abbrechen irgendwo. Aber irgendwo denkt man sich, ja, toll, denn hab ich keinen Abschluß, denn kann ich nichts machen und so.

lxi Tanja (GY8G3/425): Oder man vergleiche, was weiss ich jetzt, irgend einen Beruf von einem, sei es ein Beruf den jemand mit einem Hauptschulabschluss kriegen kann, den kriegt ja wohl jetzt eher einer der Abitur hat als einer der jetzt wirklich nur Hauptschule gemacht hat, also ist auf jeden Fall wahrscheinlicher (...)

NDS: Also würdest du sagen, im Endeffekt, wenn man Abitur hat ist man schon auf der sicheren Seite?

Tanja: Na, man ist ein bisschen auf der sicheren Seite. Es gibt auch ganz viele Würstchenverkäufer, die Abitur haben, aber die sind dann eben Würstchenverkäufer und kriegen keine Sozialhilfe. Also es ist auf jeden Fall ein kleiner Vorteil.

lxii Melanie (GO10G3/1011): Früher, da hat man, so vor drei, vier Jahren haben- wurd da noch jeder angenommen, und jetzt muß man dafür auch schon Abitur haben, um da irgendwas zu verpacken, wo wir Schüler das auch machen. Das find ich ganz komisch. Wird auch ständig entlassen, also, viele, die jetzt- auch, die schon ganz lange da sind, die jetzt schon zehn Jahre da sind oder so, die haben auch jedes Jahr noch Angst, daß sie entlassen werden oder so.

lxiii Claudia (RE10G4/122): Na, ich will mein Abi nachmachen und dann was mit Kindern.

NDS: Also dann studieren?

Claudia: Nee, dann hab ich einfach auch bessere Chancen bei der Ausbildung da was zu kriegen nach dem Abi.

lxiv Nadine (GO8G2/1083): Aber manche, die auch Abschluß Eins haben, die kriegen auch manche gar keinen Job so. Da kenn ich auch eine, die hat das auch ganz schwer gehabt. Die war letztes Jahr hier und hat auch bestanden mit Eins und hat ganz schlecht einen Job gefunden.

Ixv NDS (GO10G3/951): Aber sonst würdet ihr sagen, na, gut, wenn man sich wirklich gut anstrengt und ein bißchen cleverer ist, dann geht das schon.

P: Nö.

An: Nee, na manche Leute, die gut sind so, die haben auch noch keine Lehrstelle bekommen.

Ixvi Tanja (GY8G3/497): Kann natürlich auch sein, dass ein Realschüler eine eins auf dem Zeugnis hat und der auf dem Gymnasium eine drei.

Manuela: Ja, dann ist das besser.

Tanja: Dann muss man sagen, dass auch Abi vielleicht nicht so gut ist.

NDS: Ja, aber der kann ja dann nicht an einer Universität studieren.

Dirk: Ja, aber ich hab zum Beispiel mal in der Zeitung gelesen, die hatten einen Abiturienten und einen Realschulabgang und da wurde nicht der Abiturient genommen, sondern der andere.

Ixvii NDS (GO10G2/1845): Habt ihr so das Gefühl, daß eigentlich schon jeder mehr oder weniger die gleichen Chancen hat auf dem Arbeitsmarkt?

Christiane: Nee. Überhaupt nicht, also Ich denk mal auch, es ist manchmal so, du mußt gute Leistungen bringen, aber andererseits kannst du, wenn du jetzt Abitur hast und zu gute Noten hast, können sie dich nicht bezahlen. Also, das ist komisch, man weiß nicht, was man machen soll.

Anja: Überqualifiziert.

Christiane: Ja, das ist das Risiko.

Ixviii Patrick (GO10G3/958): Ich will mal sagen, heutzutage muß man sich auch aussuchen, ob man wirklich Abitur und so was machen will. Wenn man sein Abitur noch macht, da gehen etliche Jahre wieder verloren, und da ist die Arbeitslosenquote noch höher. Das soll man sich wirklich zweimal überlegen.

Ixix Tanja (GY8G3/302): Und na, meine Mutter war jetzt zu einer Besichtigung auf einem privat Gymnasium in [Name der Stadt] und jetzt tut sie auch eine Menge dafür, dass sie mich doch überredet kriegt, dass ich doch dahin gehen möchte.

NDS: Und warum möchte sie unbedingt, dass du dahin gehst?

Tanja: Weil sie möchte mir das halt ermöglichen, sie hat gesagt, wenn ich wirklich will, weil das kostet irgendwie 500 Euro im Monat dann sparen sie auch so, dass sie mir das ermöglichen können, weil wir sind ja nun nicht reich und wir haben das Geld auch nicht so, aber sie würden sie hat gesagt wenn ich wirklich wollte, dann würden sie mir das ermöglichen.

NDS: Und was ist da besser an der Schule?

T: Also, erstmal sind die Klassen kleiner und angeblich sollen die auch die Leistung steigern.

Ixx Anja (GO10G2/270): Na, davor hab ich auch Angst. Das hatte meine Schwester anfangs, wo, da hat sie ja hier eine Ausbildung angefangen gehabt. Da mußte die jeden Pfennig umdrehen, daß sie sich überhaupt irgendwie ein paar Schuhe kaufen konnte, weil die so wenig verdient hat irgendwie!

Ixxi Melanie (GO10G2/1655): Da [im Betrieb] musst du dann drei Monate arbeiten ohne Bezahlung. Drei Monate, das ist doch unglaublich (...) und dann kannst du immer noch nicht sicher sein, dass sie dich übernehmen. Ich weiss wirklich nicht, wie man das finanzieren soll.

Ixxii Christiane (GO10G3/971): Man muß überlegen, was man sonst macht, man muß immer einen Ausweg finden, also, man kann sich jetzt nicht heutzutage auf eins versteifen, sondern wenn man irgendwas lernen möchte muß man auch mehrere Möglichkeiten haben. Oder wenn man keinen Beruf bekommt, dann muß man halt gucken, was man dann macht. Also, muß man sich alles schon überlegen.

Ixxiii Robert (RE10G1/125): Der Jugendclub ist ein Treffpunkt für Arbeitslose und so, das ist ein bisschen assi.

Nadja: Da, neben dem Kindergarten.

NDS: Und da gehen eher Jüngere hin?

Nadja: Nee, da sind die, die nicht arbeiten wollen.

Christoph: Ja, die, die nicht arbeiten wollen.

Robert: Die nicht arbeiten wollen, die treffen sich dann da nachmittags. So 16-20 jährige.

NDS: Und wieso sind das die, die nicht arbeiten wollen?

Robert: Na, ich weiss nicht, das sind die mit Hauptschulabschluss, so gerade so, Bewerbungen nicht eine geschrieben, oder vielleicht 2.

Nadja: Oder brechen sie [die Ausbildung] ab.

Christoph: Oder nehmens nicht an.

Nadja: Oder wenn sie was kriegen, dann brechen sie es ab.

Robert: Und auch nur durch Glück gekriegt, naja, und dann kommt das zustande, dass die hierbleiben. Und die fühlen sich da ja auch wohl wie es aussieht.

Ixxiv Frau P (Interview September 2004): Ich denke mal, vor 5, 6 Jahren, waren die Möglichkeiten nicht so groß. Sicherlich, auf dem Arbeitsmarkt ist nicht viel zu holen, machen wir uns da nichts vor, aber erst mal so an sich in der Vorbereitung sind die nicht schlecht, die Sachen. Ich weiss das jetzt nur von Neubrandenburg, da kann man sich auch für diese BFO Kurse anmelden, und die sind kostenlos, da muss man dann zwar mal eine Woche in den Ferien investieren, aber da machen die auch die ganze Bewerbungsmappe fertig.

Ixxv Melanie (GO10G2/1551): Na ja, Bewerbungen, das- wir haben, ich glaube, bei drei oder vier verschiedenen Lehrern haben wir Bewerbungen geschrieben.

Anja: Die sind immer anders!

Melanie: Jeder Lehrer hat das anders gemacht. Und das war total zum Kotzen. Und da hast du gedacht: Okay, ich weiß das jetzt alles, kann und dann wurde das zensiert, und da hatten wir eine schlechte Note gleich gekriegt, nur wenn man das nicht so gemacht hat, wie derjenige das dann wollte. Und dann hab ich auch bei BFO, da haben wir das auch noch mal ganz anders gehabt. Versteh ich irgendwie nicht. Weil, irgendwo, da ist ja, das ist ja alles gleich.

Ixxvi Robert (RE10G2/482): Wenn man jetzt eine Bewerbung schreibt, in Deutsch im Unterricht würde man den noch abgeben. Abern wenn man den Job haben will, dann kann man nicht so eine Bewerbung abgeben.

Ixxvii Melanie (GO10G2/1586): Aber einem Lehrer würd ich das [den Lebenslauf] nicht zeigen.

Anja: Nö. Ich wüßst auch gar nicht, welchem Lehrer ich das zeigen sollte. Nee, nee. Da wird jeder- jeder Lehrer hat eine andere Vorstellung von jedem so, und jeder Sache, und das find ich voll blöd. Na, ich würd dann irgendwie beim Arbeitsamt nachfragen, ob sie irgendwie Vorlagen haben, wie man so was richtig schreibt und so was alles (...) Und dann würd ich irgendwie so gucken, vergleichen, was besser aussieht und origineller und so, und dann würd ich das auch so machen.

Ixxviii Melanie (GO10G2/1577): Also, ich würd eher, ich würd eher dann zum Arbeitsamt noch mal gehen.

An: Ja, würd ich auch machen.

Melanie: Zu dem Herrn, und das noch mal zeigen. Oder hier, die Frau S [Sozialarbeiterin]. Die hier arbeitet, weil die ja auch BFO macht, also Berufsfrühorientierung.

Ixxix Sebastian (RE10G1/615): Der kümmert sich um gar nichts.

Nadja: Nee, um gar nichts.

Robert: Wenn wir mal Veranstaltungen haben mit der Parallelklasse zusammen, das ist schlimm. Grundsätzlich muss sich dann die Lehrerin, also Frau X von der Parallelklasse darum kümmern, dass wir mit einbezogen werden. Weil unser Klassenlehrer kümmert sich überhaupt nicht.

Nadja: Sonst würden wir eigentlich gar nicht rumkommen (?) würd ich sagen.

Christoph: Nee, würden wir nicht.

Ixxx Doreen (GO10G2/1460): Naja, vielleicht haben die ja eine Liste, aber weisst du, da gehen vielleicht 30 Leute hin und fragen nach Ausbildungsmöglichkeiten für Krankenschwestern und dann haben die alle die gleiche Liste und schicken ihre Bewerbungen alle an die gleichen Krankenhäuser.

Ixxxi Katharina (GO10G2/1486): Also, als Reiseverkehrskauffrau müßte man sich jetzt auch schon bewerben, aber steht überhaupt noch nichts drin [im Internet], und denn erst wieder zum Ende, und dennist es meistens alles zu spät. Und jetzt mach ich das denn so, da geh ich- zum Beispiel bei K [Einkaufszentrum] gibt's auch immer Reisebüros, und dann geh ich da rein und frag, und eine hat mir auch neulich gesagt, sie hat sich bei einer Zentrale beworben, und dann

sollt ich das dann auch machen. Und, also, das ist immer wirklich am besten, man fragt nach. Weil, sonst kommt man nicht weiter.

lxxxii Patrick(GO10G2/944): Sagen wir's mal so, so wirklich Ahnung haben davon tun sie nicht mehr.

I: Wie?

Patrick: Also, viel helfen können sie mir auch nicht, aber sie würden's versuchen.

I: Wieso meinst du, nicht mehr?

Patrick: Na ja, die haben ihre Berufe, haben sie schon schön lange, und- Weiß nicht, so wirklich Ahnung haben sie davon nicht mehr. Auch so allgemein von Bewerbung schreiben und so.

I: Meinst, da hat sich schon viel verändert, daß sie eigentlich nicht mehr so recht wissen?

Patrick: Ja, seitdem die Mauer gefallen ist hat sich viel verändert.

lxxxiii Melanie (GO10G2/1382): Na, ich kenn meist solche Leute, die kennen sich auch mehr damit aus, die auch mehr mit Jugendlichen zu tun haben. Aber unsere Eltern, glaub ich, ich glaub, die verstehn das nicht so, wenn man mehr in so einen künstlerischen Beruf möchte, und denken so, nee, und das ist keine Zukunft, und- Find ich irgendwie komisch. Weil die, die sind da einfach anders erzogen.

lxxxiv Silke (Go10G2/1058): Und meine Mutti war ja auch vorher arbeitslos und so, und sie hat dann auch immer viele Bewerbungen geschrieben. Und deswegen denk ich, dass sie das auch kann.

lxxxv Natalie (PE10G2/384): Na, meine Mutter kann mir schon helfen, weil, die war jetzt vor kurzem, vor ein paar Monaten, war die im Bewerbungstraining. Und sie kann das auch so gut mit Computer, weil sie damals eine Umschulung zum Mediengestalter gemacht hat. Aber sie hat trotzdem keine Arbeit gekriegt.

lxxxvi NDS (RE10G2/492): Bei wem erkundigt ihr euch sonst?

Martin: Die Eltern ja.

NDS: Habt ihr das Gefühl, die können einem gute Ratschläge geben?

Martin: Naja, manchmal will man sie einfach nicht annehmen, die Ratschläge, glaube ich.

Robert: Ja, weil man selber noch denkt, dass es Käse ist.

Martin: Ja, das ist einfach uncool.

lxxxvii Nadja (RE10G4/150): Für mich war das wichtig, dabei in ich erst drauf gekommen, was ich machen möchte, weil ich hab das beim [Name des Supermarktes] gemacht.

lxxxviii Luise (PE8G2/176): Na, also ich hab schon Praktikum gemacht, ich war schon in der Apotheke und im Hotel und so.

I: Wie kommt das, dass du schon so viele Praktika gemacht hast?

L: Na, erstmal wollte ich Geld verdienen in den Sommerferien und das war gleichzeitig ein Praktikum, das hat mir meine Mutti gesagt, da kann man mehr kennen und schon mal reingucken und dann im Sommer bin ich im Hotel gewesen, drei Wochen und beim Zahnarzt und so.

lxxxix Miriam (GO8G2/675): Ich mach nächstes Jahr in den Ferien da (...) Also, da geh ich auch ins, also, Buchhaltung (...) Wenn ich bei Mutti dann bin, also, in [Name der Stadt] dann zwei Wochen.

xc Luise (PE8G2/215): Ja, das ist eine Freundin von meiner Mutti, die wohnt in X und die arbeitet da [in einer Kanzlei] und die hat auch gesagt, ich kann da Praktikum machen.

xci Robert (Interviewtraining): Naja gut, müssen wir ja nicht, aber ich denke das ist ein verdammt gutes Training auch für zukünftige Job-Interviews. Ich denke, damit kann man gar nicht früh genug anfangen, meinst du nicht? Und hier kriegen wir auch noch gutes Feedback.

xcii Amelie (GY10G2/214): Also Familie ist wichtig, dann ganz doll wichtig meine Freunde, also die wohnen ja alle nicht hier, ich bin ja jetzt erst hergezogen. Die wohnen so 150 km von hier Richtung Rostock, und dann nochmal östlich. Ja. Und dann wohnt da auch mein Vater, der ist mir auch so relativ wichtig. Dann hab ich mein Hobby, Tischtennis, und mein Klavier, dann hier hab ich meine Katze. Schule ist relativ wichtig, weil ich will ja später auch mal was werden und

dann auch wichtig ist mir, dass ich hier so Umwelt, das Wasser hab aber auch so die Stadt, dass ich halt beides so kombinieren kann und später möchte ich unbedingt mal nach Frankreich und wenn es geht auch unbedingt nach Paris weil ich da halt schon mal war und auch total begeistert war.

NDS: Warst du da im Urlaub?

Amelie: Ich habe eine Sprachreise gemacht und Urlaub.

xciii Tanja (GY8G2/146): Ja, also erstmal irgendwo hier bin ja ich, hier. Dann hab ich drumrum Hobbies, also erstmal Computer, weil ich sehr gerne im Internet bin und da [online] halt Freunde auch hab und ja, Musik. Ich zeichne auch gerne, photographier auch gerne und ja, dann hab ich jetzt hier die Turnhalle, weil ich ja seit 2 Jahren zum Badminton gehe und da auch einmal in der Woche, dann hier oben die Schule, weil ich da ja auch hinmuss, darf. Dann hab ich hier meine Freundin S, ... und dann hab ich hier so insgesamt Freunde und dann hab ich hier unten Bremen, da wohnt von mir eine sehr gute Freundin aus dem Internet, da wollte ich eigentlich jetzt in den Ferien hinfahren, aber meine Eltern sind dann in Urlaub gefahren [und hatten keine Zeit mich dorthin zu fahren]. Und dann hab ich hier noch Berlin, da wohnt mein Cousin, und den würde ich gerne mal hinfahren, also den würde ich gerne mal besuchen. So, dann da unten ist J., die wohnt da unten in der Nähe von Berlin, das ist meine Brieffreundin, die mittlerweile zur email-Freundin wird, was ich aber eigentlich recht schade finde, weil ich schreibe lieber Briefe, das ist viel persönlicher, das finde ich schöner. Ich will jetzt Bassgitarre spielen und das ist 'Sam'. Das ist der Name für das Ding [die Gitarre], was ich kaufen will. Ich hab mir die auch schon angekuckt, und ich gebe allen Sachen Namen. (...) Und hier oben hab ich London weil ich sehr gerne mal nach London ziehen würde, weil erstmal finde ich die Englische Sprache sehr schön, ausserdem interessiert mich das auch kulturell sehr. Ich werde irgendwann in den Sommerferien nach London fahren.

xciv Tanja (GY8G3/67): Ich weiß nicht, was ich machen will. Also, ich weiß, was ich nicht machen will, aber was direkt, das weiss ich nicht. Also, ich möchte eigentlich nichts Routinisiertes, Stumpfsinniges machen, wo man eigentlich jeden Tag genau dasselbe macht. Zum Beispiel, wo man jeden Tag Formulare ausfüllen muß oder sowas, das würde ich nicht gerne machen wollen. Ich will irgendwas machen, wo ich mich selbst einbringen kann. Wo mir nicht vorgeschrieben wird was ich machen soll. Ich will was machen, wo ich auch noch selbst was sagen kann.

xcv Anna (GY8G3/81): Also, zuerst mache ich meine Krankenschwester, dann geh ich nach West-Berlin oder so, auf jeden Fall eine Grossstadt, dann arbeite ich nachts oder abends oder so im Krankenhaus und verdien mir dazu Geld, in einer Handchirurgie am besten und da kenn ich da schon alle, weil im Studium muss man ja ein Praktikum machen, und das kann ich dann in der Handchirurgie machen, weil das interessiert mich irgendwie und ja, und dann würde ich einen Dokortitel machen und dann einen Professor (lacht) und dann bin ich ungefähr fünfunddreissig. Und ansonsten wird ich Schauspielerin.

xcvi Thomas (GY10G2/248): Ich würde gerne zum Schüleraustausch [dauert normalerweise 6 bis 12 Monate] nach Neuseeland.

NDS: Und warum grade Neuseeland?

Thomas: Na, Amerika, da weiss man ja nie so wann man da abgeballert wird. Und in Neuseeland ist das auch landschaftlich sehr schön.

NDS: Kannst du dir auch vorstellen, da zu leben?

Thomas: Nee! Da kann ich ja gar nicht die Sprache und so, nee. Nee, das sind ja auch ganz andere Verhaltensweisen und Lebensumstände. Ich glaub, in Deutschland haben wir schon mehr Geld als die da und einen besseren Lebensstandard.

xcvii Patrick (GY10G2/182): Also, als wichtigstes hab ich Neuseeland aufgeschrieben und als zweitwichtigstes Familie. Und Fussball, und ein paar Freunde und als abstossend oder nicht mögend hab ich Deutschland draufgeschrieben. Also, da bin ich sehr abgeneigt.

xcviii NDS (GY10G3/209): Warum hast du denn so eine Abneigung gegen Deutschland?

Patrick: Na, erstmal von der Einstellung der Menschen hier, die sind besserwisserisch und vereinen halt alle schlechten Eigenschaften, die Deutschen. So, zweitens mag ich die Politik nicht, von der Landschaft her geht das so.

NDS: Was ist denn so dein grösster Kritikpunkt?

Patrick: Na erstmal diese Leute, die glauben die Rechten könnten was weiss ich was in Deutschland bewegen und so ein Kram, dieses ganze Teilung und sowas.

Caroline: Was für eine Teilung? Die Ost und West Teilung oder was?

Patrick: Na, dass die Menschen das gelernt haben von früher [sozialistische Normen und Werte], dass sie immer noch an diesem Schwachsinn hängen.

xcix Anika (RE10G4/218): Na, ich nehme das, was ich kriege. Und wenn das weiter weg ist, gehe ich da auch hin. Und wenn das hier ist, dann bleib ich halt hier, dann muss man sehen.

c Melanie (GO10G3/1024): Ich kann doch an meiner Mutter sehen, wie kaputt es [die Arbeit] sie macht. Sie arbeitet am Fließband und das ist eine ganz schöne Belastung für die Leute. Vor allem hat man da wirklich kein geregeltes Wochenende. Wenn da ein Großauftrag reinkommt, dann müssen die auch Samstags arbeiten. Und wenn am Tag noch was geschafft werden muß, dann müssen sie eben weiter packen und alle müssen länger bleiben. Das will ich wirklich nicht.

ci Anja (GO10G3/1080): Ich möchte einen normalen Arbeitstag haben. Montags bis Freitags so von 9 bis 17 oder 18 Uhr und dann den Sonntag komplett frei. Das wär toll.

cii Melanie (GO10G2/1986): Geld ist schon wichtig, aber so richtig viel Geld muß es nicht unbedingt sein, ich muß nicht darin schwimmen können, aber ich möcht halt mir was leisten können und vielleicht auch jeden Monat irgendwas weglegen davon, so daß ich jeden Monat was sparn kann. Und daß ich dann dann irgendwann mal in Urlaub fahrn kann oder mir was schönes leisten kann oder so was. Oder wenn ich weiter weg wohn, daß ich dann auch immer das Geld hab, dann wieder zu meiner Familie zu fahren, daß ich jetzt Bus und Bahn nehmen kann oder so was. Das ist schon noch so eine kleine Absicherung, aber ich muß nicht darin schwimmen können, weil, dann wird man hochnäsig und arrogant, und dann denkt man, man kann alles.

ciii Rebeka (PE10G1/865): Hier in Penzlin ist mein Zuhause. So, und dann hab ich ja eben die Schule hingemalt, wo ich ja immer dann in der Woche hingehen muß und lerne. So, und dann fahr ich meistens Bahn, also, ich hab den Führerschein gemacht, dann fahr ich meist mit dem Motorrad Freunde besuchen. Dann fahr ich mit meiner Freundin zusammen, die auch Fahrerlaubnis hat, nach Werder, zu einer alten Klassenkameradin. Oder eben nach Alt Rehse, zu einer Freundin. Und da verbringen wir gemeinsam die Zeit mit Abhängen und so was. Oder eben, wir fahren beide zusammen nach Neubrandenburg. Dann gehen wir ins Kino oder in die Disco, ja, oder gehen shoppen. Ich geh da auch immer zur Kieferorthopädin wegen der Zahnsperre. Und das ist Redefin, weil, ich fahr ja nun auch immer reiten, in Groß Vielen, und da ist die Besamungsstation von Redefin, das ist ein richtiges Landgestüt und jedenfalls, da fahr ich dann auch immer jedes Jahr öfters hin, weil ich da auch ein Pferde reite.

civ Annika (PE10G1/895): Also, ich hab erst hier das Haus von uns gemalt. Denn halt hier die Dorfstraße, den Dorfplatz wo meistens Fußball gespielt wird. Denn unser Dorfteich, wo meistens auch immer der Ort ist von uns Jugendlichen [wo wir uns treffen], dann zum Beispiel F's Zuhause, wo wir Tee trinken, oder bei C. Dann halt der See, wo wir meistens im Sommer sind. Da müssen wir nicht weit fahrn. Dann halt Treffpunkt zum DVD gucken, oder halt, wenn's mal kalt is, dann treffen wir uns im Raum [zur Verfügung gestellt von der Gemeinde]. Dann hab ich noch den Schulweg gemalt und dann J's Zuhause, wo wir uns auch treffen.

cv Lena (GO10G2/1990): Ich möchte halt nur einen Job kriegen der es mir ermöglicht meine Miete jeden Monat zu zahlen und vielleicht auch noch etwas Geld zu sparen um mal in Urlaub zu fahren oder so. Ich möchte halt sicher sein, dass ich genug Geld verdiene, um über die Runden zu kommen.

cvi Matthias (F8G1/620): Also, das ist unser Haus, und wenn man denn weiter geht, das ist Omas Haus.

I: Wie weit ist das so?

M: Das ist eigentlich bei uns auch im Dorf, das ist nicht weit, da geht man fünf Minuten. Und das ist unsere kleine Schule hier. Das ist zum Beispiel jetzt bei mir zu Hause, wo ich mit meinem Hund spiele.

cvi Annett (F8G1/707): Da wohn ich. Da ist die dumme Schule. Da ist unser See, da ist mein Garten, da bin ich, da ist die Kirche.

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Publications

1. Schäfer, N. & Yarwood, Richard (2008) 'Involving young people as researchers: uncovering multiple power relations among youths', *Children's Geographies*, 6(1): 121-135.
2. Schäfer, N. (2007) "'I mean, it depends on me in the end, doesn't it?" Young people's perspectives on their daily life and future prospects in rural east-Germany', 121-134, in Panelli, R., Punch, S. and Robson, E. (eds) *Global Perspectives on Rural Childhood and Youth: Young Rural Lives*. Routledge: New York.
3. Schäfer, N. (2005) 'Jugendliche Lebenswelten in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern', Arbeitsbericht, preliminary research report [online]. Available from: http://www.caminante-projekt.de/download/Camino_Werkstattbericht07.pdf [accessed: 01.07.2008]

Involving young people as researchers: uncovering multiple power relations among youths

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In this paper, we address the issue of giving young people a voice by involving them as interviewers in the research process. While highlighting the beneficial outcomes and the empowering potential of this method, we critically discuss the assumption that peer-led interviews create less hierarchical power relations as no adult is involved. We thus caution against seeing this method as the ultimate solution to young people's marginalisation. Considering that participation is a form of power, we argue that it is essential to acknowledge and work with the power relations that characterise young people's everyday lives and that thus also affect the creation of a participatory arena with them. Power relations *among young people*, however, have been mainly neglected in previous research. The paper draws on a participatory research project conducted with young people (14–16 years old) in rural east-Germany that focuses on the complexity of young people's daily life experiences and perceptions of their future prospects.

Keywords: methods; empowerment; participation; rural youth; young people as researcher

Addressing the 'politics of childhood'

Geographers have recently called for a greater engagement with inequalities through less hierarchical practice in social geography (Kitchin and Hubbard 1999, Cloke 2002, Pain 2003, 2004). Matthews *et al.* (1999) have emphasised that there should not be a separation between academic work challenging the marginalisation of those who are facing exclusion (Mattingly and Falconer-Al-Hindi 1995, Kesby 2000). Researchers examining young people should therefore take responsibility for addressing the politics of childhood (Valentine 1996). There is a need to listen to original young voices rather than relying on adult interpretations of their lives (Philo 1992, Morrow and Richards 1996, James and Prout 1997, Matthews *et al.* 1998b, Matthews and Limb 1999, Aitken 2001, Matthews 2001a, Haudrup Christensen 2004). In this context, participatory research is seen as *one way* to foreground the perspectives of young people and to identify, and challenge, forms of social exclusion they face (Alderson 2000, Cahill 2004, Pain 2004). In this paper we will focus on one specific form of young people's participation in the research process: their *involvement as interviewers*.

This technique is advocated as a method that allows a less hierarchical relationship between the researcher and the researched to develop (Alderson 1995, 2000). It is argued that young

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people identify relevant topics and discuss them more openly and freely than they would with an adult researcher (see Alderson 1995, Lansdown 2001, Kellett *et al.* 2004), resulting in a deeper insight into young people's life-worlds. Considering that young people and children 'ask different questions, have different priorities and concerns and see the world through different eyes' this method can make an 'important contribution to knowledge [that] can only be made by children themselves' (Kellett 2005, p. 3).

However, we argue that the implications of involving young people as researchers have not yet been fully considered. Scant attention has been given to power relations that exist *among young people* themselves (Matthews *et al.* 1998a, Holloway and Valentine 2000, Panelli *et al.* 2002). Young people's active involvement can also have exclusionary and disempowering effects and care must be taken not to exclude certain groups of young people (see Boyden and Ennew 1997, Hart 1997, Matthews 2001b, Vandebroek and Bie 2006).

This paper foregrounds these multiple power relations and examines what implications they have for involving young people in participatory research and the kind of insights that these techniques can give into young people's everyday lives. In doing so, we warn against the oversimplification that young people's involvement in research offers a solution *per se* to their marginalisation. Empirical evidence will be drawn from research that involved 14–16-year-olds as interviewers and interviewees in a project that examined young people's lives in rural eastern Germany.

Empowerment through participation: the theoretical context

'Empowerment' is characterised by engaging participants in the research process to minimise the power hierarchy between the researchers and researched. It allows participants to develop a critical understanding of their own life-situation and leads to the development of strategies to challenge inequalities (see Barry 1996, Bowes 1996, Pini 2002, 2004, McIntyre 2003). Empowerment can be seen as 'the end result of participative practices where each participant has control and/or influence over issues of concern to them' (Barry 1996, p. 2).

Empowering young people in research has been put into practice very differently, ranging from simply listening to children, up to including young people in most or all phases of the research (Alderson 1995, 2000, Boyden and Ennew 1997, Lewis and Lindsay 2000, Lansdown 2002, Kellett *et al.* 2004). Similarly, their involvement spans from acting as researchers carrying out adult-designed interviews (Baker *et al.* 1996) to deeper involvement in the development of research questions and interview schedules (see Alderson 1995, 2000, West 1999, Warren 2000, Jones 2004, Kellett *et al.* 2004, Kellett 2005). Such involvement recognises children as social agents, cultural producers and experts of their own lives. It acknowledges that young people's life worlds, their experiences of spaces and places differ from those of adults and that they are therefore 'the best resource' for understanding youth (Corsaro 1997, p. 103, see also Kellett 2005). Including young people as researchers offers a genuine perspective into young people's lives and supports the aim of minimising unequal power relations between adult researcher and young researched.

However, whether 'empowerment' can be achieved through the research process, and whether this should be a research aim at all, is debatable. Empirical work has shown that participatory approaches are often highly affected by funding priorities, personal and professional interests (Cornwall and Jewkes 1995, Bowes 1996, Cooke and Kothari 2001a), as well as gender-specific interests (Cornwall 1998). These interests, however, may not correspond with participants' views or the socio-cultural context the research project is situated in (see Cornwall and Jewkes 1995). The researcher thus has to acknowledge, that he/she may not 'know what would be empowering for others' (Gore 1992, p. 63).

This means that participatory research can constitute and create new forms of domination resulting in exclusion and marginalisation (see Cleaver 2001, Cooke and Kothari 2001a,

Mohan 2001, Cornwall 2003). Critical voices have even highlighted that 'tyranny is both a real and potential consequence of participatory development' and argue that participation demands rethinking, if not abandonment (Cooke and Kothari 2001b, p. 3). This critique is based on the understanding that participation is an 'unjustified' (see Cooke and Kothari 2001b, p. 4) exercise of power. In this sense it is not surprising that the aim to 'empower' is sometimes interpreted as an 'injection of power' (Long and Long 1992, p. 275).

In line with these critiques, Harden *et al.* (2000) have pointed out that young people's involvement in research does not automatically change the fact that one person is the interviewer and one is the interviewee. This could create new forms of power hierarchies which can, for example, position the child interviewer 'between adult researchers and the child researched' (Harden *et al.* 2000, p. 2.19). Further, the matching of interviewers and interviewees by researchers according to pre-determined criteria may not necessarily facilitate a closer relationship in the interview (see also Puwar 1997, McDowell *et al.* 2005).

However, following Kesby (2005, 2007), we argue that acknowledging participation as a form of power should not lead to the abandonment of participatory research. Referring to Foucault's understanding of power, Kesby (2005) argues that the discourses and practices constituting empowerment and participatory research are—like *all* social relations—embedded in and constitutive of particular material sites and spaces. Calling for a more coherent theorisation of spaces of participation Kesby argues that 'while it [participatory space] is brought into being by performances that facilitate empowerment, relations constituted elsewhere may curtail empowered performances within it' (Kesby 2005, p. 2056). To facilitate sustained performances of empowerment it is essential to identify the different power relations that characterise people's everyday spaces so that they can be re-performed within and beyond the participatory arena.

Empowerment through participation: methodological considerations

Academics who have involved young people as researchers (Alderson 1995, 2000, Baker *et al.* 1996, West 1999, Warren 2000, Kellett *et al.* 2004, Kellett 2005, <http://childrens-research-centre.open.ac.uk>) argue that training is necessary to achieve a *meaningful* involvement of young people in the production of *useful data* (Warren 2000).

We are sceptical, however, about the potential of the method to challenge ultimately young people's subordinate societal position. Training young people to become professional researchers may, on the one hand, increase the likelihood that adults listen to them and take them more seriously (Pole *et al.* 1999, p. 51, see also Wyness *et al.* 2004, Hill 2006). It does, on the other, run the risk of becoming a token gesture (Hart 1997) that reinforces young people's marginalisation as adults define what is appropriate training and what is not.

Professional training implies a clear methodological understanding of what counts as acceptable academic knowledge. Considering that academics research young people's lives mainly in a 'narrow and conservative' way (see Pole *et al.* 1999), such a professionalisation may run the risk of constraining young people from finding their own way of expressing their thoughts. Yet, 'child-friendly' methods contradict the post-modern construction of young people as competent social agents and neglects to acknowledge the heterogeneity of their lives (Christensen and James 2000, Punch 2002). It risks reducing them to a homogenised group of 'others'. Thus, it 'is not so much the methods and techniques employed, but the degree of engagement of participants within and beyond the research encounter' (Pain and Francis 2003, p. 43) that matter.

The way adults construct and understand childhood and youth thus has a major impact on our understanding of the meaning of research and participation and on how *we want* young people to engage in research and political decision making. We have to be more critical about the methods we use to give young people a voice as 'even methods that are defined as participatory can be

disempowering and excluding for respondents if used with the wrong group, in the wrong situation or the wrong way' (Boyden and Ennew 1997, p. 83).

This does not mean that we are arguing against the training of young people. We value it as *one* way to equip young people with new skills and to give them more control over the project by sharing knowledge which may empower them. These skills may also be valued by policymakers or future employers (see McKendrick 1999). However, to avoid reproducing existing power hierarchies it is also necessary to reflect on the specific needs, interests, fears and abilities of young people as well as the wider context and the power structures that characterise their everyday lives. In the following section it will be discussed how these critical considerations of young people's involvement were addressed in the main author's doctoral work with young people in rural east-Germany.

Developing a participatory research design: an empirical example

I¹ now draw on examples from video-taped peer-interviews conducted by young people from two out of the nine groups. As no adults were present during these interviews, it was possible to examine how effectively participatory research methods provide a deep insight into the multiple power relations among young people and how these power-relations affect research.

The project was developed together with 65 young people between the ages of 14–16 years in three small towns in rural east-Germany, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Schäfer 2007). The research aimed to give a more detailed picture of the complexity of young people's daily lives in rural east-Germany in the context of the severe social, economic and demographic recomposition that has characterised post-socialist restructuring (Fischer and Kück, 2004, Kröhnert *et al.* 2005). It aimed to elaborate how young people perceive and experience forms of social disadvantage using a participatory research approach.

These participants were contacted via different schools that represented the three levels of educational achievement of the German secondary school system. These schools were situated in three small towns in the South of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. All of the nine groups of young people received interview and data analysis training at the beginning of the project and over half of the participants conducted peer-led interviews. They were also given the opportunity to develop their own research projects.

I had to be aware that the idea of involving young people reflected firstly *my* academic understanding of participation and represented one of *my aims* for the research project. Acknowledging that young people's agency is not only practiced in their decision to participate but is equally reflected in their decision not to get involved (see Hill 2006), I had to take into account that it was possible that none or only a small number of students would carry out the role of researcher, even after receiving training. It meant, however, that it was essential to enable, but not to predefine, young people's involvement. I therefore decided to offer young people a combination of traditional and more innovative methods that they could make use of, according to their interests and needs. This meant that some young people engaged more actively in focus group discussions while others seemed to favour individual methods like drawings (of mental maps for example), writing, producing a collage on their daily lives. Other participants wanted to become researchers themselves. It has to be highlighted, however, that becoming involved as interviewers represented only *one* method young people could choose from and participating in the training session did not oblige them to take over actually the role of a researcher.

Teachers frequently asked me if they should put a group of students together which they thought would be the *most appropriate* to participate (mostly referring to the best or calmer pupils in class). To avoid such preselection (Matthews 2001b), I insisted on introducing myself and the project to the whole class so that young people could make an informed decision as to whether they wanted to participate. When young people decided to participate, I asked the teacher if these young people represented only the most dominant or interested ones in the class.

Teachers were often surprised about the mix of the groups, indicating that this method included those who were normally very shy or not interested in joining in in-class discussions.

The actual research training session was divided into two main parts. First, a brief introduction to qualitative and quantitative research methods was given so that the participants could make informed decisions about the kinds of research methods they wanted to use. This part also included issues like protecting the rights of the researched, ensuring health and safety, dealing with unpredictable situations, planning for things that can go wrong and so on.

Secondly, an exercise was developed on how to design, prepare and conduct interviews about young people's daily life. Here, differences among the groups occurred that reflected on power relations among young people. Some participants, for example, distanced themselves strongly from specific groups of young people and expressed that they did not want to include them in their own research projects. Other groups, however, did not identify these barriers and easily developed several strategies how to approach young people within their local environment. This offered important information about the networks young people were part of and their experiences of participation and negotiation of power as limits and opportunities of participation within and beyond the research were identified.

Furthermore, an introduction to technical equipment (laptop, digital recorder, microphone, video- and photo camera and tripod) was given. Participants had time for practical exercises so that they would feel confident and comfortable in using the equipment. Students got the chance to take over the role of the interviewer, the interviewee and the camera-operator to gain a more complex experience of the interview process and see the interview situation from different perspectives.

While this activity was developed in line with the recommendations for training sessions developed by scholars like Alderson (1995, 2000), Kellett (2005) and Fraser *et al.* (2004), I want to emphasise that young people's specific communication skills had a major effect on the way that it was conducted. Some students from lower educational levels, for example, identified follow-up questions and reacting flexibly to their interviewees as problematic. In these cases we concentrated much more on the preparation of the interview. The young people and I developed interview questions together, wrote them down as full sentences and also read them out several times before the actual interview. This was particularly important as some of these students had reading difficulties. Furthermore, young people were given several chances to conduct interviews themselves so that they would get more comfortable doing it. It became clear that students with lower educational background and younger students needed more specific and personal feedback than older students or those from a higher educational level who were often more experienced with speaking freely through, for example, giving presentations in school.

Gender also played an important role, particularly in regard to the way young people made use of and familiarised themselves with the technical equipment. It was obvious that male participants often could not wait to try the video camera out themselves and enjoyed practicing and experimenting with the equipment. In contrast to this, female participants took a less active role. Some girls even expressed their fear about 'doing something wrong' or breaking equipment. Thus, it was very important in the practical aspects of the training session to include everybody equally. It meant that participants who seemed to be unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the technical equipment were given more time to familiarise themselves with it and more personal feedback to build up their confidence. However, it was often necessary to prevent male participants dominating the use of technical equipment, even at later stages of the research.

The training was not over in one session. The whole research project was rather understood as a 'participatory arena' (see Kesby 2005, 2007) which offered both multiple insights into the ways how research can be done and opportunities for participants to try things out themselves. The first focus group discussion, which generally took place a week after the training session, was seen as another way to give young people an example of how discussions can be held.

After we finished this first discussion I showed participants the thematic guideline I had prepared for the session. Students were often very surprised that we had not only discussed all or most of the topics on my list, but that this also had been done in the order of my guideline although 'we were just chatting' (Marie aged 14). This insight into my preparation and way of working represented an important step to make the project transparent to students. It supported the aim of making young people more familiar with the role of the interviewer by taking me as an example. It demonstrated that I did not insist in claiming a right of the role of interviewer but was willing to share it with participants.

In the second and third focus group discussion I asked young people to choose and prepare their own topics of interest and encouraged them to conduct the interview without me (I would wait outside the room until I was asked to join the group again. I did not set any time restriction and peer-led interviews lasted between 5 and 45 minutes). That means that before young people started to develop their own research projects and to interview other young people (or adults) outside the group, they had the chance to familiarise themselves with the role of the interviewer. The focus group discussions thus opened up a safe space to try out and develop personal interview skills.

As training was given at the beginning of the project I was concerned that participants would mainly copy me and my way of interviewing. However, it became obvious that young people often already had a clear idea about the ways interviewers pose questions. Young people thus interviewed their peers in very different manner that ranged from the way teachers test their knowledge in school, to emulating the interview-styles of sports-reporter, show-hosts or TV presenters.

Young people's motives to participate in the research project

The participants expressed a very high interest in the research training and it represented a key motive to participate in the research for many participants. I want to argue, however, that it was crucial to offer the research training without obliging young people to continue their participation in the project. In other words, the success of involving young people with such different backgrounds, abilities and interests was, at least partly, dependent on the fact that participants were not obliged to become interviewers themselves. For example, Anna (15), decided to attend the training *only* because I had emphasised that this would not be connected with any obligation to become an interviewer. However, nearly 2 months later, at the end of the project, Anna did the main work for a video project on young people's everyday lives in her hometown for which she interviewed several adults and other peers on different topics. She had become much more confident during the research process and enjoyed practising the new skills she developed during the 3 months of research-participation. This example demonstrates that some students would not have participated if they would have been obliged to become researchers themselves. It indicates the risk to exclude less confident and shy young people from the research if the level and/or kind of participation is decided on *a priori*.

In addition to this it became clear that the training was appealing to students for four other reasons:

1. *Curiosity*. The whole project was different from normal leisure activities that were available to young people in the region. Although I am German, the project seemed to be very attractive to young people because it was funded by a British University. Young people perceived it as a sign of serious interest that somebody who was living in another country came to their region and even lived in their area to talk to them.
2. *Learning how to use the equipment* (video camera, photo camera, digital recorder and so on).
3. *Interest in the topic of the research*. Young people found the research project interesting because they felt that they were rarely asked about their thoughts, wishes and fears.

4. *Vocational preparation.* The training was also seen as a way to develop their communication skills and to gain more self-confidence. Robert (16) described it as follows: 'I think this is pretty good training for future job-interviews. I think we should start as early as possible to train for this, don't you think? And here we get pretty good feedback for it'. Each participant got a certificate in English and German at the end of the project which they could attach to future job applications.

It became obvious in the research process that gaining additional qualifications represented a major aspect of young people's everyday life and thus a key motivation to participate in the project. After several weeks into the project young people and I therefore decided to organise a workshop for all participants that included career training. It demonstrates that young people's motivations to partake in research are heavily influenced by their everyday life experiences.

In the following section I will focus on the multiple power relations among young people and how it affected the research process by analysing interview-excerpts from the peer-led interviews conducted by young people.

Peer-led interviewing and the negotiation of power

In the first example I want to refer to interviews conducted by students from a special needs school (*Förderschule*) that represents the lowest educational level in Germany. These young people are often referred to as problematic as they have learning and communicating difficulties. After the interview-training, participants from this school expressed the wish to interview other young people. They thus developed an interview guideline which contained both questions we had addressed in our discussions before (for example: What are your career aspirations?), and very specific questions that the pupils were eager to ask their peers (the boys for example wanted to ask students about their favourite cars while the girls wanted to know if the other students planned to have pets).

The following examples from these peer-led interviews show that interviewer Sebastian (15 years) had a specific understanding how his interviewees should respond to his questions and that he used different techniques to guide them through the interview. However, it will become clear that power relations were negotiable in the interview situation.

Sebastian conducted four interviews altogether, which lasted around five minutes each. Lars (15 years old) took over the role of his assistant and video-taped the interviews with permission. After having explained that everything was highly confidential and that participation was completely voluntary, Sebastian started with the interview. On the video-tapes it was apparent that he was mainly leaning over the guideline printout trying to read out the questions which often kept all his attention. The excerpt below shows how Sebastian formulated his questions, what kind of answers he got and how he reacted to the responses of his interviewees:

Example 1: Sebastian (15) interviewing Tim (9) and Jan (9)

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 1 Sebastian | What would you like to do when you grow up? |
| 2 Tim | Tractor-driver. |
| 3 Jan | Tractor-driver. |
| 4 Sebastian | Do you think its fun?* |
| 5 Tim | Yes. |
| 6 Jan | Yes. |
| 7 Sebastian | You shouldn't always say the same!* |

*This marks additional follow-up questions that were not included in the original interview-guideline.

This short extract already demonstrates some key characteristics of Sebastian's interview style. Sebastian gets only very short answers that often do not even consist of a full sentence but of just one word. As both interviewees furthermore give the same reply, Sebastian includes a follow-up question ('Do you think its fun?') with which he intends to give the boys the opportunity to explain in more detail why they want to become tractor-drivers. However, this question stimulates a yes/no response which does not motivate the interviewees to respond more fully. At this point Sebastian admonishes the boys to answer more accurately. This indicates that Sebastian has a specific understanding how his interviewees should respond and demonstrates how Sebastian makes use of the power of his position as interviewer. He sets out clear rules which his interviewees have to follow.

The short answers given by his interviewees can be understood as an outcome of this regulation, however, as becomes apparent in the video-analysis. The video shows that Sebastian points a finger at the person he wants to respond (Figure 1).

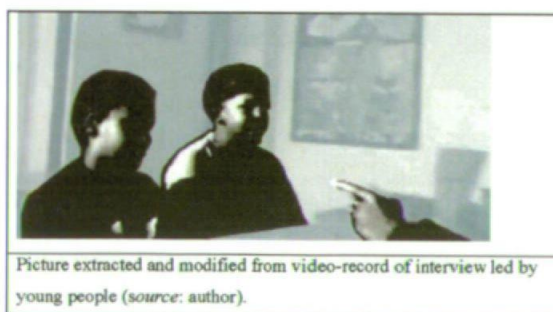
As soon as one of the boys has given an answer Sebastian switches to the second interviewee, meaning that the boys are not given enough time to answer more fully. Sebastian is thus *controlling* not only *who responds when*, but also *how long* the response should be. Sebastian thus (unintentionally) restricted the responses of his interviewees.

While it can be said that Sebastian is in the more *powerful position* in this interview situation, it would be over-simplified to describe his interviewees as powerless. Tim and Jan rather find their own ways to *counteract and thus challenge the power relation* within the interview situation. This finds its expression for example when they refuse to follow Sebastian's *order* and remain silent or just give a very short response even though he keeps his finger pointed at them. This demonstrates that the role of the interviewer can be a means of asserting power but participants are in the position to challenge this claim as power relations are always the outcome of negotiation.

I probably do not have to point out how proud this group of students was about their performances as researchers. Their teachers were impressed that their students were able to conduct this project and how responsible and reliable the students proved to be. In a meeting with the head of school and the class teacher afterwards both expressed that they never thought that their students would have been able to do this on their own. The teacher concluded that they should probably be more confident in the abilities of their students. But it is important to remember that teachers work with different constraints and to different targets than I did in this research project.

Second example

The second example comes from a group of *Realschule* students, who attend secondary school leading to a degree that is comparable to the British GCSE. This group of young people consisted



Picture extracted and modified from video-record of interview led by young people (source: author).

Figure 1. Sebastian interviewing two boys aged 9.

of eight boys and girls aged 16 and 17. After having attended the training session and the first focus group Christoph (aged 16) volunteered to prepare a topic for the following group discussion and to take over the role of the interviewer. Christoph did not want to make use of my offer to meet up beforehand to help him prepare the session, which is why we only had a brief informal chat just before the actual group discussion. Having chosen the topic of music and its meaning for people his age, Christoph had conducted a small survey within his class, asking class-mates what type of music they were listening to. He had worked out the percentages of how many students were listening to rock, pop and so on. His hypothesis was that boys and girls generally listened to very different kinds of music and he wanted to find out why this was the case. In order to answer this question he had devised a number of sub-questions. From my point of view Christoph was well prepared for the interview situation and I was impressed by the effort he had put into the preparation of the session.

At the focus group discussion (I left the room for the time that Christoph led it) Christoph presented his research results to the group as an incentive for the others to engage with the topic and to express their own thoughts about it. After Christoph finished introducing his results he addressed one student directly to get the discussion on the meaning of music for the group members started. The following excerpt of this peer-led interview gives an insight into the different strategies Christoph used to engage his class mates in discussion:

- 1 Christoph Anika, why are you for example listening to—you are mainly
- 2 listening to rock music, right? Do you have any specific reason for
- 3 that, do you connect it with a political statement?
- 4 Anika No.
- 5 Christoph No? Not at all? Are you listening to any other music?
- 6 Anika I listen to a wide range of music.
- 7 Christoph Wide range. But mainly rock?
- 8 Anika Yes.
- 9 Christoph OK. Karl, what is your opinion on the Böhse Onkelz²
- 10 [name of a German band]?
- 11 Karl I like the music.
- 12 Christoph Only the music? But what do you think about the lyrics?
- 13 Karl Well, the lyrics tell you something about life, I would say.
- 14 Thomas Which band?
- 15 Christoph The Bösen Onkelz. Sebastian, so your favourite band is Die Ärzte
- 16 [name of a German punk-band]?
- 17 Sebastian Yes.
- 18 Christoph (Repeating) YES? Oh my God. Do you have any reasons for that?
- 19 Sebastian Because of the music.
- 20 Christoph Mhm. (silence)
- 21 Nadja I think the reason for all of us is because we just like the lyrics.
- 22 (silence) Or do you connect it with a particular meaning?
- 23 Christoph Well, I don't know.
- 24 Nadja See!
- 25 Robert Yeah, but he can't really say I listen to it because it is right-wing
- 26 music, can he?
- 27 Nadja Well, but that's the truth, isn't it?
- 28 Robert Well, then I have to punch him (laughs).
- 29 Christoph Why? That's not a big deal, is it, if he listens to right-wing music.
- 30 It doesn't mean that he agrees with it.
- 31 Mike And why are you listening to it then?

- 32 Christoph Well, because I like the music, I mean, probably not so much the
 33 lyrics but the instrumental aspect.
 34 Mike Yeah, right.
 35 Robert That is absolute nonsense. It is as if I listen to music without voices.
 36 Christoph Yes, I (silent) I do not care about lyrics but (silent) but it is like
 37 rock music for me.
 38 Robert Yeah, and I listen to Jeanett Biedermann [German rock singer]
 39 and I love it because I do not care about lyrics. (laughs)
 40 Christoph (silent)
 41 Nadja Well, have you finished?
 42 Robert Come on, ask the next question.
 43 Christoph Well, now I got side-tracked.
 44 Sebastian The topic is *music*.
 45 Nadja Well, are you going to ask the next question or not?
 46 Robert You haven't finished yet, so go on!
 47 Christoph Actually, I think I have finished.

Due to his insider knowledge about the musical taste of his class-mates Christoph is in the position to address group members individually and ask them very precise questions. As Christoph gets only a very short reply from Anika even after posing a follow-up question he changes his strategy and engages somebody else (Karl) in the conversation (9). Contrary to Anika's monotonous answers Karl reacts more actively. But before Christoph can respond to Karl's description of what the song texts mean to him Thomas interrupts the conversation (see 14). It seems as if this interruption has an irritating effect on Christoph as he moves on to include another member of the group (Sebastian) without any reference to Karl's statement. This, however, results once again in a very short reply (17). Christoph gets obviously frustrated at this point as his attempts to stimulate a discussion among his class-mates do not seem to prove very successful. With the first signal of giving up, Christoph even becomes silent as if he ran out of questions (see 18–20). At this point it becomes obvious that Christoph does not know how to handle the situation and how to keep the conversation going. As Christoph is at a loss of how to continue his role as an interviewer, Nadja explains the group behaviour to him (21). She challenges Christoph in asking him what meaning he connects with the kind of music he is listening to. On the basis of his own understanding of and relationship to music Christoph is thus given another opportunity to engage everybody in the discussion. However, realising that he has lost control over the interview as he is now the one being asked, Christoph adopts a rather defensive manner, replying 'Well, I don't know' (23). From Nadja's point of view this reply seems to prove that Christoph is not even clear what he is aiming for with all his questions. Nadja expects Christoph, as the interviewer of the session, to have a rationale for and understanding of the questions he poses. Otherwise, he does not qualify for the position of the interviewer. It means that Christoph's position as the interviewer who moderates the discussion has been put into question by one interviewee.

At this point another member of the group, Robert, gets engaged in the discussion trying to explain—at least in parts—why Christoph gets only very short answers (25–26). Robert refers here to the specific kind of music Karl is listening to which the majority of the group connects with the right-wing-scene. Robert argues that Karl can not really speak his mind in the group as this political direction is—at least for Robert—not acceptable. Robert thus verbalises the underlying power-relations that characterise this group reflecting on the norms and values that affect the group communication. The fact that Robert sees the need to explain these underlying rules to Christoph demonstrates that he either does not perceive Christoph as a

(full) member of the group (which would explain why Christoph does not know the rules) or that these rules have not been negotiated clearly enough before (which would mean that this topic has not been discussed before in the group, for example). Robert therewith refers to a kind of tacit agreement among the members of the group that have an impact on what is accepted and what is not. It refers to power relations that characterise the composition of the group. Not all members of the group, however, seem to share this understanding of these group norms (see Nadja 27). This can either refer to the fact that the participants of the focus group normally belong to different groups and thus have not developed their own group identity or that there is—at least from Nadja's point of view—still space for negotiation of these group understandings. She questions Robert's authority to claim for the existence of such rules. However, Robert gives Nadja a very clear response that he does not accept a breach of the rules *arguing* with his physical superiority (28).

At this point, Christoph enters the discussion again and questions Robert's statement on the connection between listening to right-wing music and somebody's own political attitude (29–30). It becomes clear, however, why Christoph intervenes at this point. Christoph is defending himself as well, as the group knows that he listens to right-wing music. However, Robert has already signalled that he will not accept any explanation, an understanding which is shared by Mike (31). There is no space for negotiation or reconciliation, as the group dominated by Robert denies Christoph the right to do so.

Getting impatient with Christoph's silence, and thus his inability to fulfil the role of interviewer, Nadja calls on Christoph to bring the interview to an end (45). But before Christoph is able to fulfil this last task, Robert takes charge again, telling Christoph that he has not finished yet. This finally symbolises that Robert exposes Christoph as being incapable to fulfil his role as an interviewer. Christoph's position within the group can be described as powerless as the others tell him what to do and how to do it. He finally gives in (47) officially resigning from his role of being the interviewer. Since he had prepared many more questions for the session, which he did not even mention in front of the group, it becomes clear that Christoph gives in under the pressure of the group (at that point I was called back into the room and we continued with the group discussion after Christoph had given a short summary of the topic discussed in my absence).

Despite this, the outcome of the interview can be described as a major achievement. After all, Christoph volunteered as the first of the group to prepare a topic of his interest for a discussion with his class-mates. He proved to the group and me in a very creative and enthusiastic way that he is able to prepare himself for the role of the interviewer by conducting a small case-study on young people's favourite kinds of music prior to the actual interview and thus offered an interesting and original incentive to engage the group into the discussion. Furthermore, Christoph even managed to engage Robert, who can be described as the spokesman of the group, in the discussion and kept the interview going for a while. Since Christoph did not seem to belong to the group-leaders in the first focus-group, it is possible that the development of the interview matched his expectations. After the meeting was finished that day I stayed longer to talk to Christoph about his interview experience. He described briefly that nobody had really said much but that it was 'ok'. He did not seem to be disappointed. We discussed several ways how to motivate participants to engage more actively in group discussions (see also Kellett 2005) while I emphasised that even professional interviewers had to face these problems and that I was impressed by his preparations for the interview. Christoph seemed to have enjoyed the interview experience as it was obvious that he became more actively involved in the following group discussions.

The discussion on the meaning of music for young people's political orientation gives an insight into the power relations young people are engaged in and the ways how they negotiate them. From an academic perspective, Christoph initiated a highly valuable focus group discussion as it captured 'the inherently interactive and communicative nature of social action and social

meanings, in ways that are inaccessible to research methods that take the individual as their basic unit of analysis' (Tonkiss 2004, p. 198). His interview thus gives an insight into what Barbour and Kitzinger (1999, p. 5) have described as the most beneficial outcome of focus group discussions: that they uncover 'how accounts are articulated, censured, opposed and changed through social interaction and how this relates to peer communication and group norms'.

The excerpt demonstrates not only the existence of multiple power relations among young people but also the multiple ways through which these power are (re)produced, negotiated, and challenged within the research situation. Not to acknowledge these power relations among young people means to be blind towards the heterogeneity of young people's lives. Neglecting this dimension of power relations would furthermore restrict the empowering potential of the research as it would be unable to acknowledge and challenge power inequalities and forms of marginalisation.

Conclusion

In this paper we have argued that the emphasis on unequal power relations between adult researchers and young researched has led to a negation of the multiple power relations between young people. This paper has highlighted the complexity and heterogeneity of young people's lives by elaborating these relations. The empirical examples thus emphasise that young people are not a homogenous group of 'others' and that they resist, challenge, acknowledge or negotiate power amongst themselves.

It could be shown that such power relations affect not only young people's everyday lives but also the research situation in multiple ways. To understand fully the participatory potential, as well as the limits and obstacles of facilitating participation and empowerment, it is necessary to take these power relations into account. Furthermore we highlighted that it is essential to reflect on our understanding of participation, as it might refer to a very narrow and conservative construction that does not correspond with young people's needs and the contexts they are growing up in. It must be acknowledged that participatory research is not distanced from power, which means that it can not only empower disadvantaged groups of people but also reproduce forms of marginalisation and exclusion. Neither empowerment nor participation should thus be seen as inherent in a specific set of methods, but as the outcome of engagement and negotiation as well as knowledge-sharing and shared decision making.

Involving young people as researchers is a highly valuable approach that has the potential to acknowledge and highlight young people's agency and thus to challenge inequalities between them. However, if this method is applied independently from young people's needs and interests and the broader context they are living in this can turn into a research practice that structurally excludes groups of young people (see also Vandebroek and Bie 2006) and reproduces existing inequalities. It means that young people's involvement in research as researchers should not be discussed as a new research paradigm as it would assume that this technique guarantees a solution to marginalisation and exclusion. This runs the risk of promoting a *tyranny of the method* (Cooke and Kothari 2001b) which disconnects research approaches and methods from the research context.

In this context we want to refer to Horton and Kraftl's (2005) recent critical discussion of the emergence and use of the term 'children's geographies'. Contesting the assumption that geographers place themselves and their research in the service of children's needs and interests, Horton and Kraftl (2005, p. 139 original emphasise) raise the question are "Children's Geographers" really so selfless and heroic? This is an important question which prevents children's geographies 'becoming too much of a comfort zone' (ibid, p. 139). We want to highlight, however, that participatory research offers one opportunity to address critically and reflexively these concerns.

The specific implications for doing participatory research on and with *young people* is that access to them is often highly regulated through adult-gatekeepers (Matthews *et al.* 1998b, Harden *et al.* 2000, Balen *et al.* 2006) which means that issues of inclusion and representation need to be considered (even more) carefully. However, the need to acknowledge participation as a form of power and to work with these is not unique of the study of youth and childhood.

Furthermore, the call for greater political awareness and responsibility corresponds with wider debates in human geography on ethical aspects of conducting research and the position of the academic researcher (see Cloke 2002). Scholars in social geography are thus emphasising the need to uncover structures of marginalisation and a stronger engagement with social inequalities (Kitchin and Hubbard 1999, Pain and Francis 2003, Pain 2004). In this context participatory research can offer a valuable approach (Boyden and Ennew 1997) to research marginalised others.

This project was set up to give young people a voice through developing a participatory arena. It is only apt to end this paper with some of their words about it:

Well, I think it is great what we have achieved in this project. We really managed to talk about things that we are interested in and we could always say what we did not like. (Katie, 16 years old)

I really learned a lot in this project. About interviewing and using the video camera. I really liked the work with the video camera. (Johann, 14 years old)

It was great that somebody was actually listening to us! (Karen, 14 years old)

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Notes

1. Hereafter 'I' refers to the corresponding author who conducted the empirical work.
2. *Böhse Onkelz* started as a German punk-band in 1980 and quickly gained a cult status in the right-wing scene. Although since 1986 the band officially took position against every kind of extremism including right-wing extremism their music is still often perceived in the context of right-wing radicalism. This also finds its expression in this interview, as the group refers to the *Bösen Onkelz* as a right-wing band.

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7. The term *TKW* stands for *Tenaga Kerja Indonesia* and specifically refers to men (as an individual or as a group) working overseas. *TKW* or *Tenaga Kerja Wanita* is the term used for international migrant women workers.
5. Unemployment figure from United States–Indonesian Society (2005).
6. Bryant (2005) makes this estimate based on official figures of total number of overseas migrants and recent UNPD 2002 fertility rates, which estimates that the average woman will have 1.5 children by the time she is thirty years old.
7. Lombok is favoured by recruiters because it is a poor, predominantly rural island with few avenues for generating income and because the people of Lombok, the *Sasak*, are considered to be hard workers. Lombok is also well-known as 'the island of a thousand mosques', and the inhabitants are devout Muslims, which is regarded as an added advantage to employers in Malaysia and the Middle East.
8. Although official migrants to Malaysia are relatively few, due to strict immigration and employment laws, the business of illegal migration, conducted without legal work visas, is huge. Many studies have shown that the number of illegal Indonesian workers (who are assisted by middlemen or *calo*) exceeds the number of legal workers (Bandiyono et al. 1999). Illegal migration is often preferred by employers as they can exploit the situation by paying lower wages and offering appalling living and work conditions.
9. This fact was reported by the village head, the village midwife, and the village health staff, who all attributed the rise in divorce rates to the rise in overseas migrations.
10. All Indonesian soap operas and *sinetrons* (Indonesian television dramas, many imported from Mexico and Brazil) depict women and girls as wealthy, powerful consumers. See Widodo (2002) for an analysis.
11. The status of being a *Jamal* in Lombok is not an easy one. *Jamal* are targets of male jokes and seen as easy prey for an extra-marital affair.
12. In January 2006 Yayasan Peduli Anak, a street children NGO based in Mataram, Lombok, conducted a study of 200 street children who had dropped out of school and left home (personal communication, Ferter, 2006a). Most of the children were aged from nine to fifteen years old, were from Lombok, and from broken homes: 'many times the mother went to Malaysia to work there and left their children with the father, family or just alone' (Fetter, 2006b). An additional reason for leaving home given by the children was that their mother had remarried, and the child was not accepted by the step-father and was subsequently rejected or neglected. Other children were sent to the street to earn money by their impoverished parents (see also Beazley, 2000a).
13. Cita cita saya pingin ke Malaysia untuk menjadi kuli bangunan atau kerja perkebunan. Kalau saya sudah besar pasti saya akan ke sana (translated from the Sasak language by fieldworker).
14. Saya mau keluar. Desaku adalah desa tertinggal di Indonesia (translated from the Sasak language by fieldworker).
15. These conclusions raise important debates around gendered power relations in the village as well as the well-publicized abusive conditions the girls often face when working overseas. Thus, young women may find that having escaped the stifling conditions of home life they are faced with even harsher and exploitative conditions with their new employers. This issue clearly points to the necessity for further research.
16. See also Williams (2005) and her analysis of how young women from Eastern Indonesia use transnational migration as a means of seeking a 'new subjectivity'.
17. As justly noted by one of my reviewers, according to Scott (1985) it is questionable if the rural poor have ever accepted their poverty passively.

10 'I mean, it depends on me in the end, doesn't it?'

Young people's perspectives on their daily life and future prospects in rural East Germany

Nadine Schäfer

INTRODUCTION

Children and young people have been identified as one of the groups most severely affected by declining standards of welfare and by the rise of socio-economic inequalities in post-socialist societies (Brake and Büchner 1996; Kollmorgen 2003; McAuley 1995). However, there has been limited research to date on the ways in which young people negotiate their life circumstances and develop strategies for building meaningful and purposeful lives (see Côté 2002; Jeffrey and McDowell 2004). This chapter begins to address this gap by analysing the way rural young people in the East German state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern negotiate and seek to challenge structural disadvantages through a range of everyday practices. It follows a wider call in the study of childhood and youth to acknowledge both structural conditions that characterize young people's lives, as well as young people's agency (see Holloway and Valentine 2000a; James, Jenks, and Prout 1998).

The chapter is based on research into the daily life and future prospects of rural East German youth, which was carried out in 2004 and 2005 and adopted a qualitative, participatory approach. Here, I focus on group discussions conducted with two mixed gender groups of 15- to 16-year-olds from rural communities. Each of the groups consisted of eight participants who were recruited through local schools. The narratives of young people's daily lives and hopes for the future that are presented here give an insight into the diverse ways in which young people experience, cope with, challenge, and resist forms of disadvantage and social exclusion related to their location in rural East Germany. They also show a need for greater recognition of the creative and resistive practices of people's everyday lives in post-socialist societies (Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Hörschelmann 2002; Pilkington et al. 2002; Pilkington 2004; Pilkington and Johnson 2003; Stenning 2005).

Research on young people's lives in post-socialist countries (see Hörschelmann and Schäfer 2005; Machacek 1997; Pilkington et al. 2002; Pilkington 2004; Pilkington and Johnson 2003; Riordan et al. 1995; Roberts

far-reaching economic, political, and cultural consequences that have led to a re-definition of almost the entire fabric of everyday life' (Young and Light 2001: 942) and caused new uncertainties as lives and worlds of meanings 'lost their moorings' (Verdery 1999). Young people in East Germany are growing up in a time that is characterized by uncertainty and the need for re-orientation.

A prime example of the radical changes that have affected people's everyday life in rural areas is the restructuring of the 'Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaft' (LPGs); large-scale agricultural cooperatives that fulfilled important social functions in addition to their economic roles during the GDR. LPGs were the institutional outcome of the collectivisation and industrialisation of socialist agriculture (Wilson and Wilson 2001; Wilson and Klages 2001). These cooperatives were responsible for a wide range of social and administrative functions in villages, offering childcare, community services such as libraries, bars, and shops, and organising cultural and social events (see Rudolph 1997: 450; van Hoven 2001:41). In addition, the Freie Deutsche Jugend (FDJ; Free German Youth) offered young people a wide range of leisure facilities and organized social activities. It was the only official youth movement in the GDR; an instrument of the state that most East German youths joined at the age of 13 or 14. In 1988, 99.4 per cent of eligible school pupils and 92.5 per cent of university students were members (Schefold 1995). The FDJ monopolized organized youth activities and ran holiday camps, discos, and youth clubs for rural as well as urban young people.

Differences between rural and urban areas in the GDR were generally small, since state policies followed the ideological aim of eliminating structural inequalities between agricultural and industrial societies (see Beetz 2004). Since reunification in 1990, however, socio-economic differences between rural and urban areas have re-emerged strongly in East Germany (Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung 2000; van Hoven 2001; 2002). The restructuring of cooperatives has led to a major decline in agricultural employment (see van Hoven 2001: 42) and to the loss of social services associated with them. In addition, the FDJ lost nearly all its members and the number of youth clubs declined rapidly. Out of 9,620 state-run youth clubs that were registered in MV in 1988 only 312 such clubs existed in 1991 (Schefold 1995).

As the number of schoolchildren in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern has declined by 45.2 per cent since reunification (Statistisches Amt Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2006), due to out-migration and dramatically falling birth rates, services and facilities for young people have closed, making access to education and training and employment increasingly difficult. Young people growing up in rural East Germany are facing problems associated with changing schools and travelling further to school as well as fewer training options (see Baur and Burmann 2000; Brake 1996; Brake and Büchner 1996; Kollmorgen 2003). Partly in response to this, skilled young

people often leave the region. Such trends reinforce rather than reduce the differences between East and West Germany. Comparative research suggests that young East Germans have experienced more dramatic changes than their West German counterparts, and are more likely to perceive their future as bleak (Brake 1996; Brake and Büchner 1996; Werz 2001). In regard to this rural young people living in East Germany are still referred to as the 'losers' of reunification (see Baur and Burmann 2000; Brake 1996; Brake and Büchner 1996; Kollmorgen 2003).

While such a characterisation recognizes the multiple disadvantages faced by East German youth, it also contributes to the perception that young people growing up in these rural regions are 'a "problem", in relation to crime, drugs, political extremism' (Smith 1998: 297). This negative and one-sided picture of East German youth dominates public and academic discourses and fails to acknowledge the heterogeneity of young people in East Germany. The construction of East German youth as 'different' and 'other' may also have a negative influence on East German young people's own socio-spatial identity construction, thus contributing further to feelings of exclusion.

In order to challenge the perception of East German youths as either deviants or victims, more attention needs to be paid to discourses *by* rather than *about* them. In particular, it is important to understand the lifestyle strategies adopted by young people in response to challenges or changes that *they* view as affecting *their* lives (Hörschelmann and Schäfer 2005). The following sections aim to achieve this through an analysis of qualitative data that was produced through participatory research. The project enabled young people to define their own priority issues and to conduct much of the research themselves.

YOUNG PEOPLE IN RURAL EAST GERMANY: CONCERNS ABOUT THE FUTURE

Young people identified limited job prospects and high unemployment rates as the main disadvantage of their rural and East German residency:

Anja (15) :1 Yeah well, I think the only disadvantage we have living in the countryside is that there are not enough jobs for us. I mean, this is not only the case for [the village she lives in] but for the whole region. It is different in West Germany, though.²

This perception had a major impact on young people's day-to-day lives resulting in an often expressed fear of becoming unemployed themselves. A large number of the young people who participated in the research were thus worried that if they failed to achieve high or exceptional results in their final exams they would have little success in the job market.

This concern arose from young people's firsthand experiences of unemployment. They often had witnessed close family members becoming unemployed and were aware of the negative financial and emotional impact of unemployment on the individual. This led to a feeling of vulnerability that they too would be at risk from a lack of work. However, although young people draw a connection between their rural and East German residency and the risk of being unemployed, they described it as a personal risk which they tried to overcome as individuals.

This corresponds with Beck's (1992; 2000; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002) description of the perception of social inequalities in today's world. Beck has argued that although the reunification has led to increasing unemployment rates and poverty, these social inequalities are now explained through personal failure and are reduced to personal experiences, rather than through broader social structures, thus overlooking the structural causes for social inequalities that still exist (Beck 2002: 47). This means that social exclusion is 'collectively individualised' (see Beck 2000), which corresponds with the empirical results of Furlong and Cartmel's (1997: 7) work on young people's life experiences in modern industrialized societies as 'a wider range of pathways to choose from', which gives young people the impression that their own route is 'unique'.

The majority of the young people interviewed felt that they were responsible for their own future:

Sven (16): Well, when I come home with bad marks, how then is my mum supposed to help me? She can't do anything because it is my future.³

Similarly, Maren describes how her job prospects mainly depend on how hard she works at school.

Maren (16): I mean it depends on me in the end, doesn't it? My marks in school are not so brilliant at the moment, so I really need to do more schoolwork if I want to get a job. I think I just need to study harder for it.⁴

Given this sense of responsibility, many young people developed their own strategies to avoid future unemployment. These strategies are described below.

Strategy 1: Getting a good school-leaving certificate

Some young people developed strategies to overcome, for example, personal learning difficulties or difficulties with particular teachers, which the following extracts demonstrate:

Tobias (16): It all depends on your own motivation, I think. If you really want to get a good job, then you have to work harder for it. But there are lots of people who don't care. And just being good is not good enough any more.

Nadja (16): That sounds so easy, but I really try hard and still get really bad marks in maths. I don't know what to do any more. I just don't understand it.

Tobias (16): Well, then I would repeat the class because if your final exam results aren't really good, nobody will take you.⁵

Tobias argued that Nadja should repeat a year in school to get better results which, from his point of view, would improve her chance in the job market. Tobias made a similar decision himself since he changed schools due to problems with two subjects. He argued that he will have better chances on the job market with brilliant exam results taken when aged 16 than with higher level results, and that a change in schools would allow this. Tobias describes that he asked his parents to let him change school because he saw his future job prospects were in danger. Although his parents would have preferred that their son aimed for higher academic qualifications (taken when aged 18) he succeeded in persuading them to change his school. In doing so, Tobias accepts a much longer journey to school than before and a loss of nearly two hours of his free time everyday due to bus travel.

This example shows that young people reacted to the wider socio-economic circumstances they grow up in and developed their own strategies to overcome risks of disadvantage and to improve their own situation.

Strategy 2: Getting additional qualifications

Young people argued that it is not only essential to do well in school, but that it is also important to get some additional qualifications, which help them to develop new skills and give them an insight into different jobs. Furthermore, they felt that securing additional qualifications helped them to build networks with potential employers. Nearly all young people placed high value on school organized work placements which allowed them to work for two weeks during term time. These job experiences were perceived as very important because they offered insights into jobs available regionally and helped them to clarify in which field they wanted to work later on:

Martin (16): I never really knew what I wanted to be, so when we had to do our work placement I did not really know what to go for. I worked in a garage finally and it was really fun. Now I am trying to find a place to train as a mechanic.⁶

In this context, participation in the research project also became important for the young people. The project was designed to be participatory and to be beneficial for the participants, so they were offered a certificate (in English and German) that acknowledged their engagement in the project and described the skills they learned as useful for their future lives.

Anna (15) and Tim (16) for example, were doing some teamwork related to training in research methods.⁷ Tim suggested that he could videotape Anna's attempt to interview so that they could analyze it together afterwards. Anna, however, did not want to be filmed and said she would feel very uncomfortable and would not know what to say when other people were watching her. While Tim did not further insist on filming her, he responded:

Tim (16): Well OK, we don't have to, but I think this is pretty good training for future job interviews. We can't start training for this early enough, don't you think? And here we get pretty good feedback as well.⁸

Strategy 3: Being informed

Another way that young people actively tried to improve their job opportunities was through consulting the job centre. While a lot of young people made their own appointments and reported that they got helpful information once they had decided which job they wanted to pursue, they also described how limited the support was they got from the job centre. They found it problematic to get an appointment as the job centre was open only once a week in the next bigger town. The quality of information and assistance they received depended strongly on the consultant who was running the office. Furthermore, young people complained that they were mainly referred to job opportunities in West Germany.

Young people argued, however, that they did not want to rely on the job centre alone but searched for further options to find their own 'unique' ways of getting the information they needed. Susan (15), for example, explained that she had spent hours searching the Internet to compile a list of hospitals that train nurses. When asked if she could not get such a list from the job centre, she replied:

Susan (15): Well, perhaps they have a list, but you know, there may be 30 people asking about training opportunities for nurses and they all get the same list so they all send their applications to the same hospitals.⁹

The internet was seen by a lot of young people as a way to improve their opportunities to find job vacancies and to be more independent of institutional career services. Information was seen as key to improving job prospects. Consequently, some young people used participation in the research



Fotografin:

Als Fotograf/in arbeitet man in einem Atelier oder macht Freilichtaufnahmen, Pass- und Bewerbungsbilder, Portraitaufnahmen (Baby, Kinder, Mann, Frau, Geschwister, Pärchen, Haustiere, Hochzeiten, Einschulungen, Jugendweihen, Jubiläen usw.), digitale Bildbearbeitung (Retusche, Korrekturen), Kundenberatung und den Verkauf von Fotozubehör.

Für die Ausbildung braucht man einen guten Realschulabschluss. Perfekt wäre Abitur.

Eine besondere Anforderung bei Fotografen hier in Rabel ist, dass man ein einjähriges Praktikum absolvieren muss, bevor man eine Ausbildung beginnen kann.

Weitere Anforderungen sind dann noch gute Noten in Mathematik, Deutsch, Physik und Chemie. Das Mindestalter wäre 16 oder 17 Jahre und wenn man einen Führerschein besitzen würde, wäre das noch mehr von Vorteil.

Im Gespräch konnten wir auch noch erfahren, dass der Betrieb ausbildet. Wir fragten die Fotografin auch, wie sie zu ihrem Beruf gekommen ist. Darauf antwortete sie, dass es ihr Wunschberuf sei und dass sie am liebsten mit Babys arbeitet und Freilichtaufnahmen (Hochzeiten etc.) macht.

Figure 10.2 Interview project on local job opportunities conducted by six young people aged 15–16 years.¹⁵

project as an opportunity to investigate which kind of job training was available for them in their own town. A group of 15 and 16 year old girls thus interviewed fifteen different local employers about the kind of qualifications needed to get a job and the possibility of being given training by these local firms (Figure 10.2).

Young people felt that this project not only contributed to their own future prospects, but also for those of the younger pupils in their school because it gave an insight into the *local* job situation. The project was exhibited in the school auditorium for several weeks and was thus an example of how young people use personal engagement to find a way of overcoming the disadvantages they face.

Strategy 4: Being flexible

The young people who participated in the research highlighted the importance of being flexible. They argued that it was not enough to decide which job they liked best, but that it was more important to think of alternatives that might increase their chances of getting any job at all.

Anna (16): I believe the worst is when you come up with *one* profession you want to follow and you do not think of any alternatives. Because if

you do not get this one job, which is quite likely, then you are really disappointed and you are not able to come up with anything new quickly. If you have two or three alternatives, however, that can't happen so quickly and you have much better chances.¹⁰

Anna therefore described flexibility as an essential quality to improving opportunities in the job market. Geographical flexibility was also important:

Markus (16): To me it's all about the same. I will go where there is a future for me, where I can find a job.¹¹

Lena replied similarly:

Lena (15): It's all the same where I go. I would just like to find a job which enables me to pay my rent every month and perhaps save some money to go on holiday or suchlike. I just want to be sure that I earn enough money to pay for my own living expenses.¹²

The majority of the young people being interviewed were prepared to leave their region in order to increase their chances of finding a secure, well-paid job. The teenagers often emphasized that they aimed to move to West Germany because it offered better job opportunities and salaries than the East. Thus, some young people seemed surprised when it was suggested that they were 'forced' to move to find a good job:

Sven (16): What does that mean 'being forced'? No, I really want to leave and you know, to get a good job you have to be willing to give something up.¹³

Maja (15): When you have the idea of a special job in your head, well, then it is a great chance to go to West Germany. I mean, you have to decide what is more important: the career or to stay here and probably just get a badly paid job or even get no work. I mean, for me it is very clear, I want a job so that I earn enough to pay for my own living expenses.¹⁴

This shows that young people perceived the possibility of leaving their region as a way to improve their job opportunities rather than something that they were forced to do. It means that these teenagers did not perceive themselves as 'losers' but rather, the prospect of moving was seen as part of a self-empowering strategy they could employ to improve their prospects.

CONCLUSION

This chapter elaborates the multiple ways in which young people in rural East Germany aim to overcome their perceived disadvantages. While these young people are described in the academic literature as the 'losers' of reunification, I argue that rural young people growing up in East Germany do not only perceive themselves as victims, but also as agents who can actively improve their future prospects in finding their own 'unique' way to overcome disadvantages.

In highlighting young people's agency, I aimed to challenge the one-sided image of rural East German young people who are often described as passive with regard to the post-socialist transformation process. Such a perception, however, neglects to acknowledge the multiple ways in which young people experience and respond to transformation processes. I therefore argue that more research needs to be done on rural young people's lives in post-socialist countries.

While this chapter has focused on young people's agency and the strategies they employ, it does not argue that they can easily and equally overcome the structural disadvantages they have to face. Nor does it imply that developing such strategies will actually improve young people's job prospects (see Jeffrey and McDowell 2004: 131). Rather, it should be critically questioned which young people are more likely to develop successful strategies and the extent to which social class, gender, ethnicity, and spatiality impact on their decisions and their outcomes.

Much more research needs to be done to uncover why some young people are more successful than others at overcoming disadvantages, benefiting from opportunities, and creating their own opportunities. Specifically, attention should be paid to the extent to which rural residency acts as a restrictive factor.

However, in accordance with Panelli (2002) and Opitz-Karig (2003), I argue that the negative image of the rural and of rural residency needs to be challenged. Rural spaces are not only spaces of marginalization, but also spaces of possibilities 'where landscapes of youth can be read as terrains of creativity, conflict and change, flexing over the broader topography of political-economic processes and socio-cultural systems' (Panelli 2002: 121). That means, while socio-spatial and economic disadvantages of rural residency still need to be investigated in more detail, a more complex and heterogeneous understanding of young people's lives in rural areas of social, political, and economic transition needs to be elaborated. That is why it is all the more important to listen to young people who are living in these spaces and to analyse the multiple ways in which they challenge and resist forms of exclusion or marginalization.

While it has to be critically questioned where young people growing up in a post-socialist region fit into the concepts of Minority and Majority

worlds, I have stressed that these concepts need to be understood as contextual frames which help us to understand the broader life conditions, power-relations, and structures that may affect people's lives in these countries or regions. We have to be aware, however, that terms are often implicitly connected with particular constructions of the 'rural' or 'youth' that narrow our views and understandings (see Punch 2003). It means that we have to be more reflexive about the underlying construction which these terms refer to.

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NOTES

1. The names of the research participants have been changed in order to maintain anonymity and confidentiality. The pseudonyms used represent the gender of the participants. Information about their age is added in parentheses.
2. Anja (15): Na, also ich glaube der einzige Nachteil ist, dass es nicht genug Arbeitsplätze für uns gibt. Ich meine, das ist ja nicht nur hier [Name des Dorfes in dem sie lebt] so, sondern in der ganzen Region. Naja, das ist eben anders in West-Deutschland.
3. Sven (16): Also, wenn ich mit schlechten Noten nach Hause komme, wie kann mir meine Mutter denn da helfen? Sie kann doch gar nichts tun, ist ja schliesslich meine Zukunft.
4. Maren (16): Ich mein, am Ende liegt es doch an mir, oder nicht? Im Moment sind meine Schulnoten nicht so toll, also muss ich mehr für die Schule tun, um einen Job zu bekommen. Ich denke ich muss einfach mehr lernen.
5. Tobias (16): Es hängt letztlich alles von deiner Motivation ab, denke ich. Wenn du wirklich einen guten Job bekommen willst, dann musst du eben hart dafür arbeiten. Aber vielen ist das einfach egal. Und gut sein ist eben einfach nicht mehr gut genug.
Nadja (16): Naja, das klingt so einfach, aber ich tue wirklich alles und hab immer noch super schlechte Noten in Mathe. Ich weiss wirklich nicht, was ich da noch tun kann. Ich verstehe das einfach nicht.
Tobias (16): Naja, ich würde dann halt die letzte Klasse nochmal wiederholen, weil wenn deine Abschlussnoten nicht gut sind, wird dich keiner nehmen.
6. Martin (16): Ich wusste nie so richtig, was ich werden will und hatte keine Ahnung, wo ich mein Schulpraktikum machen sollte. Ich hab dann in einer

Werkstatt was bekommen und das hat richtig Spass gemacht. Deshalb suche ich jetzt eine Lehrstelle als Mechaniker.

7. This training took place at the second meeting I had with this group. At the early stages of the research project Anna did not want to be filmed or to interview other people. However, at the end of the project she did the main work for a video project on their everyday lives within which she interviewed several adults and other peers on different topics. It demonstrates that she became much more confident during the research process and enjoyed practising the new skills she developed during the three months of research participation.
8. Tim (16): Naja gut, müssen wir ja nicht, aber ich denke das ist ein verdammt gutes Training auch für zukünftige Job-Interviews. Ich denke, damit kann man gar nicht früh genug anfangen, meinst du nicht? Und hier kriegen wir auch noch gutes Feedback.
9. Susan (15): Naja, vielleicht haben die ja eine Liste, aber weisst du, da gehen vielleicht 30 Leute hin und fragen nach Ausbildungsmöglichkeiten für Krankenschwestern und dann haben die alle die gleiche Liste und schicken ihre Bewerbungen alle an die gleichen Krankenhäuser.
10. Anna (16): Ich glaube das Schlimmste ist, wenn du dich auf einen Beruf versteifst und dir keine Alternativen ausdenkst. Weil, wenn du den einen Job nicht kriegst, was ja ziemlich wahrscheinlich ist, dann bist du total enttäuscht und dann fällt dir so schnell nichts Neues ein. Wenn du aber zwei oder drei Alternativen hast, kann dir das nicht so schnell passieren und du hast viel bessere Chancen.
11. Markus (16): Mir ist das wirklich ziemlich egal. Ich will dahin, wo es eine Zukunft für mich gibt, wo ich einen Job finde.
12. Lena (15): Es ist eigentlich egal, wohin ich gehe. Ich möchte halt nur einen Job kriegen der es mir ermöglicht meine Miete jeden Monat zu zahlen und vielleicht auch noch etwas Geld zu sparen um mal in Urlaub zu fahren oder so. I möchte halt sicher sein, dass ich genug Geld verdiene, um über die Runden zu kommen.
13. Sven (16): Was soll das bedeuten: gezwungen werden? Nee, ich will ja weg und weisst du um einen guten Job zu bekommen man muss eben auch bereit sein etwas aufzugeben.
14. Maja (15): Wenn du dir einen bestimmten Job in den Kopf gesetzt hast, naja, dann ist es doch eine grosse Chance nach West-Deutschland zu gehen. Ich mein, man muss sich schon entscheiden, was einem wichtiger ist: der Beruf oder hier zu bleiben und dann eben vielleicht nur eine schlecht bezahlte oder vielleicht auch überhaupt keine Arbeit zu bekommen. Ich mein, für mich ist ganz klar, dass ich einen Job haben will, bei dem ich genug verdiene um gut über die Runden zu kommen.
15. Translation: Photographers work in a studio or outdoors to take pictures. It is their job to take pictures for passports or job applications, as well as portrait pictures (of babies, children, men, women, siblings, couples, pets, weddings, school enrolment, Jugendweihe which can be understood as youth consecration, anniversaries and so on). In addition to this they edit digital pictures (retouching, correcting) and are involved in customer service as well as in selling photo-equipment. To get an apprenticeship one needs to have good marks in school leaving exams, preferably higher level.

A special requirement in the photo-shop in our town is that one needs to do a one-year work-placement before starting the apprenticeship. Further requirements are good marks in math, German, physics and chemistry. You

have to be at least 16 or 17 years old and it is beneficial if you already have a driving license.

We were informed that this shop offers an apprenticeship. In addition to this we asked the photographer, why she had chosen this job. She replied that being a photographer was always her dream and that she loves to take pictures of babies and outdoor-pictures like wedding-pictures.

Jugendliche Lebenswelten in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Vorläufiger Arbeitsbericht von Nadine Schäfer (Universität Plymouth UK)

Von August 2004 bis Anfang 2005 wurde im Landkreis Müritz (MV) das Forschungsprojekt: „Lebensalltag und Zukunftsperspektiven von Jugendlichen in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern“ durchgeführt. Das Projekt wurde an der Universität Plymouth (UK, Fachbereich Kulturgeographie) entwickelt und von der Universität Plymouth (UK) sowie dem Seale Hayne Education Trust (UK) und der Foundation of Urban and Regional Studies (FURS/UK) gefördert.

Im Zentrum des Projektes steht die Frage nach der Alltagsgestaltung und den Zukunftsvorstellungen von ländlichen Jugendlichen in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern sowie deren Wahrnehmung persönlicher Entfaltungs- und beruflicher Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten. Mit Hilfe der Analyse, in wie weit sich Jugendliche in lokale, regionale und überregionale/globale Netzwerke verorten, und wie sie sich ihre eigene Zukunft vorstellen, soll herausgearbeitet werden, wie gerade ländliche Jugendliche aus einer strukturschwachen Region wie Mecklenburg-Vorpommern mit Problemen wie z.B. hoher Jugendarbeitslosigkeit und hohen Abwanderungsraten umgehen, woran sie sich orientieren und inwiefern sich lokale, regionale und globale Einflüsse in ihren Zukunftsvorstellungen widerspiegeln.

Die Ergebnisse dieser Studie sollen dazu beitragen, den Lebensalltag ländlicher Jugendlicher aus Mecklenburg-Vorpommern auf europäischer Ebene, insbesondere mit dem Lebensalltag ländlicher Jugendlichen in Süd-West England, zu vergleichen um strukturelle Unterschiede und Gemeinsamkeiten in Bezug auf den Lebensalltag und Zukunftsvorstellungen von ländlichen Jugendlichen in Europa herausarbeiten zu können.

Ein Forschungsprojekt nicht nur über sondern mit Jugendlichen:

Das Forschungsprojekt wurde von mir, Nadine Schäfer (Promotionsstipendiatin an der Universität Plymouth/UK), durchgeführt und so vorbereitet, dass die Jugendlichen so früh wie möglich in den Forschungsprozess einbezogen werden konnten, um die inhaltliche Gestaltung entsprechend ihrer Interessen und Vorstellungen ausrichten zu können. Dies sollte ermöglichen, einen tieferen Einblick in die Lebenswelten von Jugendlichen zu bekommen und ihnen vielfältige Varianten anzubieten, ihre Sichtweisen, Sorgen und Wünsche auf für sie adequate Weise (Interview, Photos, Collagen, Mental Maps) auszudrücken.

Es ging somit darum, einen ‚Raum‘, bzw. eine ‚Atmosphäre‘ zu schaffen, in der Jugendliche selbst zu Wort kommen und das Projekt selbst mitgestalten konnten. Damit ist nicht nur ein Projekt über Jugendliche sondern ein Projekt für und mit Jugendlichen entstanden.

In diesem Zusammenhang fand zu Beginn des Projektes eine Einführung in Interviewtechniken statt, indem die Jugendlichen mit dem technischen Equipment (Aufnahmegerät, Mikrophon, Videokamera etc.) bekannt gemacht wurden und selbst ihre ersten Interviewversuche durchführen konnten. Im Verlauf des Projektes hatten

die Jugendlichen immer wieder die Chance, Teile der Gruppendiskussionen eigenständig vorzubereiten und als InterviewerIn zu übernehmen, oder auch FreundInnen/SchulkameradInnen zu selbst ausgearbeiteten Themen zu interviewen (siehe eigene Projekte der Gruppen). Das Training zu Beginn des Forschungsprojektes motivierte die SchülerInnen, jederzeit Fragen zu stellen und aktiv am Projekt teilzunehmen. Darüber hinaus verschaffte es den Jugendlichen einen Einblick hinter die Kulissen des Forschungsprojektes, was das Forschungsprojekt für sie transparenter machte. Die neu erlernten Fähigkeiten sowie die Teilnahme am Forschungsprojekt wurden zum Abschluß mit einem Zertifikat (auf Deutsch und Englisch) gewürdigt, das die Jugendlichen bei zukünftigen Bewerbungsschreiben als Zusatzqualifikation an ihren Lebenslauf anhängen können.

Forschungssample und Interviewaufbau:

Der Kontakt zu den Jugendlichen wurde über fünf verschiedene Schulen (jeweils eine 8. und eine 10. Klasse) im Landkreis Müritz hergestellt. Überraschend positiv war die extrem hohe Teilnahmebereitschaft sowie die konstante und engagierte Mitarbeit der Kinder und Jugendlichen über den gesamten Zeitraum des Forschungsprojektes hinweg, obwohl alle Treffen außerhalb der Schulzeit und auf absolut freiwilliger Basis stattfanden. Im Zeitraum von August bis Dezember 2004 wurden insgesamt mit 9 Jugendgruppen á ca. 4-12 Jugendlichen (insgesamt 65 Jugendliche) jeweils zwischen 3 und 5 Interviews zu folgenden Themenschwerpunkten geführt:

- 1) Hobbies, Freizeitgestaltung und Mediennutzung
- 2) Bedeutung von Musik und Mode
- 3) Freundeskreis
- 4) Bezug zum Wohnort (Nutzung, Wahrnehmung)
- 5) Bewertung der Integration als Jugendliche/r in lokale Netzwerke
- 6) Lebensalltag
- 7) Zukunfts-/Berufsvorstellungen

Die Gruppeninterviews wurden dabei teilweise, wie bereits angedeutet, von den SchülerInnen selbst vorbereitet und durchgeführt. Die Schülerinnen leiteten dann für das von ihnen ausgesuchte Thema das Gruppeninterview, so dass ich den Raum verließ, damit sie das Interview selbständig – und unter sich – nach ihren Vorstellungen durchführen konnten. Diese selbstgeführten Gruppeninterviews dauerten zwischen 5 und 45 Minuten. Danach wurde ich wieder in den Raum geholt und mir wurde eine Zusammenfassung des Gespräches gegeben, damit ich das Gespräch daran anknüpfend weiterführen konnte.

Beobachtungen aus den selbstgeleiteten Gruppengesprächen der Jugendlichen:

In jeder Gruppe nutzten 1-2 Jugendliche die Chance des selbst Interviewens, um Themen anzusprechen, die sie besonders interessieren. Dabei war ich immer wieder überrascht, wie engagiert die Jugendlichen ihre Gespräche vorbereiteten. Die meisten hatten sich einen Fragenkatalog zurecht gelegt, so dass sie Anschlussfragen stellen konnten, sobald das Gespräch verebbte. Einige hatten darüber hinaus kleine Umfragen um Vorfeld durchgeführt wie zum Beispiel die gesamte Klasse nach dem Musikgeschmack und Unterschieden zwischen Jungs und Mädchen gefragt, um in der Gruppe zu diskutieren, welchen Stellenwert Musik für Jugendliche hat. Wieder

andere hatten sich z.B. Broschüren zur Berufsvorbereitung besorgt und berieten ihre MitschülerInnen, auf welche Weise sie sich auf ihren Traumberuf vorbereiten konnten.

Dabei war immer wieder überraschend, mit welcher Offenheit und Direktheit die Jugendlichen auch sehr persönliche Themen ansprachen. So wurden unter anderem Fragen zu folgenden Themen gestellt:

- Fragen nach Konflikten zwischen Erwachsenen und Jugendlichen
- Erfahrungen mit Trennungssituationen von Eltern und wie man sich dabei fühlt
- Ängste, von Zuhause auszuziehen
- Wie realistisch die persönlichen Chancen auf dem Arbeitsmarkt sind und was man für einen Job aufgeben würde
- Was ‚wirkliche Freunde‘ sind und welchen Stellenwert sie für einen einnehmen und vieles mehr.

Diese Themen machen deutlich, dass Jugendliche sich sehr intensiv mit ihrer Situation und ihren Zukunftsperspektiven auseinandersetzen und auch den Austausch mit anderen Jugendlichen suchen. Die Jugendlichen deuteten dabei in den Gesprächen an, dass sie selten die Gelegenheit hätten, sich über ganz alltägliche Ängste, Wünsche und Einschätzungen auszutauschen und schienen überrascht, dass dies in irgendeiner Form für mich - und damit generell für Erwachsene – interessant sein könnte.

Diese Verwunderung des Interesses an ihren Alltagserfahrungen und Zukunftsvorstellungen zeigte sich in allen Gruppen, wenn auch in unterschiedlichem Ausmaß. Es weist für mich darauf hin, dass die Jugendlichen häufig das Gefühl haben, von Erwachsenen nicht ernst, oder nicht ernst genug genommen zu werden. Dies scheint auf einen fehlenden, produktiven Austausch zwischen Erwachsenen und Jugendlichen hinzuweisen.

Das Gefühl, innerhalb des Forschungsprojektes respektiert und ernst genommen zu werden sowie ein Mitbestimmungsrecht in Bezug auf die gesamte Gestaltung des Projektes zu haben, wurde meines Erachtens von den Jugendlichen sehr positiv bewertet und mit einer Offenheit und Direktheit, sowie einem starken Engagement für das Projekt belohnt. Hierdurch erlaubten die Jugendlichen mir als Forscherin einen tiefen, faszinierenden Einblick in ihre Lebenswelten.

Selbst erarbeitete Gruppenprojekte der Jugendlichen:

Im Anschluß an die Gruppengespräche hatten die Jugendlichen die Möglichkeit, ein eigenes Projekt zu einem für sie relevanten Thema durchzuführen. Ihnen wurden dazu verschiedene Hilfsmittel zur Verfügung gestellt: Aufnahmegerät, Videokamera, Photokamera (Filme) etc. Das Spektrum der von den Jugendlichen selbst gewählten und bearbeiteten Themen ist sehr breit ausgefallen, wie Sie in der folgenden Aufstellung der Projekttitel und Inhalte sehen können:

Selbsterarbeitete und eigens durchgeführte Gruppenprojekte der Jugendlichen

Schule, Klasse	Projekt	Inhalt
Regionalschule/ Röbel 10. Klasse	Berufe in Röbel? Ein Photo- und Interviewprojekt	Schülerinnen sind in Betriebe/Geschäfte vor Ort gegangen und haben nach Ausbildungsmöglichkeiten und –voraussetzungen gefragt und Photos von den Betrieben/Geschäften gemacht.
Regionalschule/ Röbel 8. Klasse	Unser Röbel: die besten Orte und Freizeitmöglichkeiten für Jugendliche. Ein Photoprojekt	SchülerInnen haben Orte in Röbel photographiert und kommentiert, die ihnen wichtig sind.
Allgemeine Förderschule/Röbel 8. Klasse	Das will ich mal werden! Ein Photoprojekt	SchülerInnen haben sich photographiert und zeigen, welchen Beruf sie einmal ausüben möchten.
Gymnasium/Röbel 10. Klasse	Landtagswahlen in Sachsen und Brandenburg 2004. Eine Informationsbroschüre über die Wahl sowie Reaktionen aus MV	In dieser Broschüre werden anhand von Zeitungsartikeln die Ergebnisse der Landtagswahlen in Sachsen und Brandenburg 2004 zusammengefasst (Wahlkampf, Wahlergebnisse), anschließend wurden Interviews mit Jugendlichen über den Zuwachs der rechten Parteien geführt (+ Kommentar vom Mobilen Beratungsteam/RAA und Camino gGmbH).
Gymnasium/Röbel 8. Klasse	Ein Einblick in unsere Dörfer. Ein Photoprojekt	Schülerinnen stellen ihre Dörfer vor und was man dort als Jugendlicher machen kann.
Regionalschule/ Rechlin 10. Klasse	Jugendliche in Rechlin – ein Einblick. Ein Videoprojekt	In einem Video stellen die SchülerInnen ihren Wohnort, ihre Schule und Hobbies vor und erzählen, wie sie sich ihre Zukunft vorstellen.
Regionalschule/ Rechlin 10. Klasse	Rechtsradikalismus bei ostdeutschen Jugendlichen? Ein Interviewprojekt	Die SchülerInnen haben Jugendliche in ihrem Alter zum Thema Rechtsradikalismus interviewt.
Regionalschule/Penz lin 8. Klasse	Alltägliches und Besonderes. (Collagen)	SchülerInnen stellen ihren Lebensalltag über eine Collage vor: was ist mir wichtig, wo bin ich gerne etc.

Die zwei Interviewprojekte zum Thema ‚Rechtsradikalismus und Jugend‘ wurden nach der Fertigstellung mit freundlicher Unterstützung der Camino gGmbH zu einer Broschüre zusammengefaßt, die mit einem kommentierenden Anhang des Mobilen Beratungsteams Neubrandenburg sowie einem Serviceteil der Camino gGmbH Berlin als Lehrmaterial an alle beteiligten Schulen verteilt wurde. Die Broschüre kann hoffentlich als Diskussionsanreiz für den Schulunterricht dienen, insbesondere da die Interviews von SchülerInnen aus der Schule bzw. aus der Region durchgeführt wurden, und damit das Gesagte viel greifbarer für die SchülerInnen wird, sie die Antworten vielleicht besser nachvollziehen können und daher leichter daran anknüpfen können als an normale Standarttexte zum Thema ‚Rechtsradikalismus und Jugend‘.

Um die Projekte einer breiteren Öffentlichkeit zugänglich zu machen, wurden sie zu einer Ausstellung zusammengefaßt und Mitte Februar 2005 für einen Monat im Landratsamt Waren ausgestellt. Darüber hinaus wurden Ausschnitte der Ausstellung auf der Caminante Starterkonferenz in Magdeburg (Februar 2005) sowie der von Camino gGmbH organisierten Infoveranstaltung in Waren (April 2005) gezeigt. Eine weitere Ausstellung in der Jugendbegegnungsstätte der Alten Synagoge in Röbel, geführt vom Verein Land und Leute e.V. ist für September 2005 geplant.

Workshop zu ‚Jugendliche Lebenswelten in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern‘:

Im Verlauf des Forschungsprojektes kristallisierten sich immer stärker einige zentrale Themen heraus, die für die Jugendlichen wichtig waren, die wir allerdings entweder aus Zeitgründen nicht entsprechend ausführlich behandeln konnten oder aber die mit Beratungstätigkeiten verbunden waren, die über meine Position als Interviewerin und auch teilweise über mein Wissen hinausgingen.

Daher entstand nach einigen Wochen der Zusammenarbeit mit den Jugendlichen die Idee, einen Workshop für die Jugendlichen vorzubereiten, in dem diese Themen mit der Unterstützung von Experten aus dem jeweiligen Gebiet diskutiert werden konnten. Insbesondere in Zusammenarbeit mit den Schulsozialarbeiterinnen wurden die einzelnen Themen für den Workshop vorbereitete und weitere Experten kontaktiert. Auch hier war die Unterstützung des Workshops von Seiten der Schulen, Sozialarbeiter etc. enorm. Ohne einen großen Kostenaufwand konnte so innerhalb eines Monats ein Programm aufgestellt werden, das große Resonanz bei den Jugendlichen fand.

Der Workshop fand am 29.11.2004 im Anschluß an den Schulunterricht in der Zeit von 15.00 bis 18.00 Uhr in der Regionalschule in Röbel statt und wurde von einem Grossteil der Jugendlichen mit vorbereitet. Obwohl die Teilnahme am Workshop für einige SchülerInnen mit hohem organisatorischen Aufwand (Busverbindungen etc.) verbunden war, nahmen 45 von insgesamt 65 am Projekt beteiligten Jugendlichen an diesem Workshop teil.

Nach einer kurzen Begrüßung stellten sich alle eingeladenen Experten mit ihren Workshops vor, so dass die Jugendlichen die Chance hatten, sich in einen von vier Workshops für den Nachmittag einzutragen. Die vier Workshops möchte ich im folgenden kurz beschreiben:

Workshop 1: Berufsorientierung

Die Jugendlichen wurden hier von einer Berufsberaterin der AOK sowie einer Schulsozialarbeiterin, die Berufsfrühorientierung unterrichtet, auf anstehende Bewerbungsgespräch vorbereitet und bekamen direkte Informationen zu ihren konkreten Berufsvorstellungen.

Workshop 2: Rechtsradikalismus

Mitarbeiterinnen des Mobilen Beratungsteams Neubrandenburg (MBT) erarbeiteten gemeinsam mit den Jugendlichen die verschiedenen Staatsformen, von Monarchie, Diktatur und Demokratie, mit ihren jeweiligen Grundideen und Besonderheiten und diskutierten, was eine Demokratie gefährdet/ gefährden könnte. Dabei wurde problematisiert, welchen Anspruch Parteien wie die NPD und die DVU für sich erheben und wie sie gegen den bestehenden Staat argumentieren. In diesem Workshop sollte für die Jugendlichen verständlich werden, was die verschiedenen Staatsformen für eine Auswirkung auf ihr individuelles Leben haben können. Ein weiterer Schwerpunkt war die Frage nach der Verantwortung, die Jugendliche für die Gesellschaft übernehmen müssen und können. Die Jugendlichen sollten sich damit auseinander setzen, dass sie selbst mitentscheiden können, wie ihre Zukunft sein wird.

Workshop 3: Sexualität

Da die Anzahl der jungen Mütter in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern relativ hoch ist, bereitete eine Schulsozialpädagogin einen Workshop zum Thema Sexualität und Verhütung vor. Mittels eines von Jugendlichen in ihrer Schule entwickelten Spiels wurden Themen verschiedene Fragen diskutiert wie zum Beispiel: wie mit dem Thema Sexualität und Verhütung in der Partnerschaft umgegangen werden sollte, wie Jugendliche aufgeklärt werden und wie sie ihrer Meinung nach aufgeklärt werden sollten, welche Ängste und Fragen sie mit dem Thema Sexualität verbinden. Es fand ein sehr reges und offenes Gespräch zwischen den Jugendlichen statt, indem einige offene Fragen beantwortet werden konnten.

Workshop 4: (T)Raumwerkstatt

Gemeinsam mit den Jugendlichen wurde eine Liste erstellt, welche Freizeitmöglichkeiten

Jugendliche in ihren Wohnorten haben, welche Dinge sie persönlich nutzen und was sie am meisten vermissen. Im Anschluss daran wurde mit zwei Bürgermeisterinnen einerseits darüber diskutiert, welche Möglichkeiten Jugendliche

haben, um Einfluss auf die Gestaltung ihres Wohnraumes zu nehmen und andererseits darüber gesprochen, welche (finanziellen) Möglichkeiten den Bürgermeisterinnen zur Verfügung stehen, um solche Projekte zu unterstützen. Es wurde deutlich, dass die Bürgermeisterinnen sehr an einem Austausch mit den Jugendlichen interessiert waren und die Jugendlichen auch durchaus bereit waren, Verantwortung für die Gestaltung eigener Räume etc. zu übernehmen. Ein solcher Austausch zwischen Erwachsenen und Jugendlichen scheint allerdings im normalen Lebensalltag kaum zustande zu kommen.



Workshop 4: (T)Raumwerkstatt:
Jugendliche im Gespräch mit Bürgermeisterinnen

Im Anschluss an die einzelnen Workshops kamen alle Jugendlichen und Experten noch einmal zusammen, um die Themen und Ergebnisse ihres jeweiligen Workshops vorzustellen.



Abschliessende Vorstellung der einzelnen Gruppenprojekte und Workshopergebnisse durch die Jugendlichen, November 2004

Momentaner Standpunkt des Forschungsprojektes und erste Einschätzungen:

Momentan (April 2005) befinde ich mich in der Phase des Verschriftlichens der Interviews. Die Analyse des umfangreichen Datenmaterials wird noch einige Zeit in Anspruch nehmen, so dass ich noch keine konkreten Forschungsergebnisse veröffentlichen kann.

Allerdings zeichnen sich einige Trends ab, die ich hier stichpunktartig zusammenfassen möchte:

Lebensalltag im Wohnort:

- 1) Die alltägliche Mobilität der Jugendlichen ist arg eingeschränkt, da sich das Angebot der öffentlichen Verkehrsmittel häufig auf den Schulbus beschränkt und die Jugendlichen somit nach Beendigung des Schulunterrichtes (um ca. 13 Uhr) wieder in ihre Dörfer/Stadt gefahren werden. Schulalltag und Dorfalltag bzw. Alltag im Wohnort haben daher häufig nur sehr wenig miteinander gemein.
- 2) Da die Jugendlichen häufig weite Anfahrtswege zu den Schulen haben, ist es schwer, Schule als sozialen Raum für Jugendliche auch ausserhalb der Schulzeit zu gestalten. Die Jugendlichen verbringen ihre Freizeit in den seltensten Fällen in der Schule.
- 3) Aufgrund des Rückgangs der Schülerzahlen werden immer mehr Schulen geschlossen, fast jede Schule steht daher unter Profilierungszwang. Die damit verbundene Unsicherheit und der Druck, unter dem die LehrerInnen stehen, überträgt sich auf die SchülerInnen und bietet für sie einen weiteren Unsicherheitsfaktor.
- 4) In Bezug auf die Freizeitgestaltung sind die Jugendlichen häufig abhängig von der Unterstützung ihrer Eltern oder anderweitiger privater Mitfahrgelegenheiten.
- 5) Das Freizeitangebot für Jugendliche ist relativ beschränkt (ausser in Bezug auf den Bereich der Wassersportarten), so dass die Jugendlichen weite Entfernungen auf sich nehmen müssen, um spezielle Interessen verwirklichen zu können. Dies ist häufig mit dem Problem der Erreichbarkeit sowie mit finanziellem Aufwand verbunden, den sich nicht alle Jugendlichen leisten können.
- 6) Es gibt kaum öffentliche Orte in den Dörfern/Kleinstädten, die für und von Jugendlichen konzipiert sind. Allerdings suchen Jugendliche oftmals nach solchen Orten im öffentlichen Raum, um sich mit anderen Jugendlichen treffen zu können. Sie werden dann jedoch häufig von den Erwachsenen als störend und/oder als Bedrohung empfunden. Dies führt zu Spannungen

zwischen Erwachsenen und Jugendlichen, was auf eine fehlende Kommunikation zwischen Jugendlichen und Erwachsenen verweist.

- 7) Die Gestaltung der Freizeit scheint bildungsabhängig zu sein. Je höher das Bildungsniveau umso mehr steht der Aspekt des Nutzens der Freizeitaktivität für den eigenen beruflichen Werdegang im Vordergrund.
- 8) Die Jugendlichen zeigten sich über das ganze Projekt hin durchaus politisch interessiert, was sich auch in den selbstgewählten Projektthemen widerspiegelt.

Zukunftsvorstellungen:

- 9) Die Jugendlichen formulieren ganz klar, dass sich aus ihrer Sicht ihre beruflichen Chancen erhöhen, wenn sie die Region verlassen. Das Weggehen ist damit fester Bestandteil ihrer Zukunftsplanung und wird von ihnen sehr pragmatisch bewertet: Wer gezielte Berufsvorstellungen hat und diese auch verwirklichen will, muss damit rechnen, wegzugehen. In der Region zu bleiben heisst: vielleicht einen Ausbildungsplatz vor Ort zu bekommen, aber garantiert nicht den, den die Jugendlichen sich erhoffen.
- 10) Die wahrgenommene Notwendigkeit des ‚Weggehen-Müssens‘ scheint allerdings selten hinterfragt zu werden und läuft damit Gefahr, zu einem Selbstläufer zu werden. Das Wissen der Jugendlichen über regionenspezifische Ausbildungsmöglichkeiten war häufig sehr gering, was die Jugendlichen selbst damit begründeten, dass die Berufsberatungen, die sie erhalten, meist nicht regionspezifisch ausgerichtet sei.
- 11) Die Jugendlichen bewerten ihre Einflussmöglichkeiten auf ihren beruflichen Werdegang positiv. So beschreiben sie, dass sie ihre Zukunft zu grossen Teilen selbst in der Hand haben, indem sie sich über gute Zensuren und ein gutes Abschlusszeugnis bessere Chancen auf dem Arbeitsmarkt erarbeiten können.
- 12) Grundsätzlich fühlen sich die Jugendlichen von der formellen Seite (Bewerbungen schreiben, Vorstellungsgespräche führen etc.) gut auf Bewerbungsgespräche vorbereitet, da sie mit den Schulsozialarbeiterinnen in der Schule auch häufig eine vertrauensvolle Ansprechpartnerin/einen vertrauensvollen Ansprechpartner für diese Belange haben. Von Seiten der Erwachsenen (SchulleiterInnen, LehrerInnen, SchulsozialpädagogInnen) wird diese Vorbereitung auch als professionell und ausreichend beschrieben. Die Jugendlichen äusserten allerdings mehrfach den Wunsch, gezielter lokal und regional ausgerichtete Berufsberatung zu bekommen.
- 13) Die Jugendlichen zeigten eine hohe Bereitschaft, sich aktiv auf ihre berufliche Laufbahn vorzubereiten (Suche im Internet, eigene Terminvereinbarungen beim Arbeitsamt etc.).
- 14) Die meisten Jugendlichen beschreiben eine starke Bindung an die Region. Eine spätere Rückkehr nach Mecklenburg-Vorpommern schließen sie keinesfalls aus, allerdings spielen für die Rückkehr die Familie, der Freundeskreis sowie die Beschäftigungssituation eine grosse Rolle. Eine stärkere Einbindung der Jugendlichen in lokale und regionale Netzwerke könnte die Rückkehrbereitschaft wesentlich erhöhen.

Ich möchte noch einmal betonen, dass dies erste, vorläufige Beobachtungen sind und endgültige Ergebnisse der Studie voraussichtlich erst Ende 2005/2006 erscheinen. Bei Interesse wenden Sie sich bitte an:

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